

WONDER-TALES *from*  
RUSSIA

*by*

JEREMIAH  
CURTIN







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WONDER-TALES FROM RUSSIA













THEY RAN TO THE GOLDEN CASTLE.  
FRONTISPIECE. *See page 18.*





WONDER  
TALES  
*from*  
RUSSIA

*by*  
JEREMIAH CURTIN

*Illustrations by*  
MAURICE DAY



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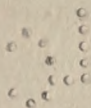
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## WONDER-TALES FROM RUSSIA.

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### THE THREE KINGDOMS, — THE COPPER, THE SILVER, AND THE GOLDEN.

**I**N a certain kingdom in a certain land lived a Tsar, — Bail Bailyanyin. He had a wife, Nastasya, Golden Tress, and three sons, — Pyotr Tsarevich, Vassili Tsarevich, and Ivan Tsarevich. The Tsaritsa went with her maidens and nurses to walk in the garden. All at once such a mighty Whirlwind rose that, God save us! it caught the Tsaritsa and bore her it was unknown whither.

The Tsar was grieved and distressed, and knew not what to do. His sons grew up, and he said to them: “My dear children, which of you will go to seek your mother?”

The two elder brothers made ready and went. After they had gone, the youngest begged permission of his father. “No,” said the Tsar, “go not, my dear son; do not leave me an old man in loneliness.”

“Let me go, father; I want awfully to wander over the white world and find my mother.”



The Tsar dissuaded and dissuaded, but could not convince him. "Well, there is no help for it, go; God be with thee!"

Ivan saddled his good steed and set out. He rode and rode, whether it was long or short: a tale is soon told, but a deed is not soon done; he came to a forest. In that forest was the richest of castles. Ivan Tsarevich entered a broad court, saw an old man, and said, "Many years' health to thee!"

"We beg the favor of thy presence. Who art thou, gallant youth?"

"I am Ivan Tsarevich, the son of Tsar Bail Bailyanyin and of Tsaritsa Nastasya, Golden Tress."

"Oh, my own nephew! Whither is God bearing thee?"

"For this cause and that," said he, "I am in search of my mother. Canst thou not tell me, uncle, where to find her?"

"No, nephew, I cannot; with what I am able, with that I do service. But here is a ball; throw it ahead, it will roll on before thee and lead thee to steep, rugged mountains. In those mountains is a cave, enter it; take there iron claws, put them on thy hands and thy feet, and climb up the mountains. Perhaps thou wilt find there thy mother, Nastasya, Golden Tress."

That was good aid. Ivan Tsarevich took leave of his uncle, and threw the ball before him; the ball rolled and rolled on, he rode behind it. Whether it



was long or short, he saw his brothers, Pyotr Tsarevich and Vassili Tsarevich. They were encamped in the open field with thousands of troops. His brothers were surprised, and asked, "Where art thou going, Ivan Tsarevich?"

"Oh!" said he, "I grew weary at home, and I thought of going to look for my mother. Send your army home, and let us go on together."

They sent home the army, and the three went on together after the ball. While yet at a distance they saw the mountains,—such steep and lofty mountains that, God save us! they touched the heavens with their heads. The ball rolled straight to a cave. Ivan Tsarevich slipped down from his horse and said to his brothers, "Here, brothers, is my good steed; I will go up on the mountains to look for my mother, and ye remain here. Wait for me just three months. If I am not here in three months, there will be no use in waiting longer."

The brothers thought, but how could a man climb these mountains? He would break his head there.

"Well," said they, "go, with God; we will wait for thee here."

Ivan approached the cave; he saw that the door was of iron. He struck it with all his strength. It opened, he entered; iron claws went on to his feet and hands of themselves. He began to climb the mountains,—climb, climb; he toiled a whole month,



reaching the top with difficulty. "Well," said he, "glory be to God!" He rested a little, and walked along on the mountain; walked and walked, walked and walked, saw a copper castle, at the gate terrible serpents fastened with copper chains, crowds of them; and right there was a well, and at the well a copper bucket hung by a copper chain. Ivan Tsarevich drew water and gave the serpents to drink. They became quiet, lay down, and he passed into the court.

The Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom ran out to meet him. "Who art thou, gallant youth?"

"I am Ivan Tsarevich."

"Well, hast thou come of thy own will, or against thy will?"

"Of my own will; I am in search of my mother, Nastasya, Golden Tress. A certain Whirlwind bore her away out of the garden. Dost thou know where she is?"

"No; but not far from here lives my second sister, the Tsaritsa of the Silver kingdom,—maybe she will tell thee."

She gave him a copper ball and a copper ring. "The ball," said she, "will lead thee to my second sister, and in this ring is the whole Copper Kingdom. When thou overcomest Whirlwind, who keeps me here and flies to me once in three months, forget me not, poor woman, rescue me from this place, and take me with thee to the free world."



“I will,” said Ivan Tsarevich. He threw the copper ball before him; the ball rolled ahead, and he followed after. He came to the Silver Kingdom and saw a castle finer than the first, all silver; at the gate were terrible serpents fastened to silver chains, and at the side of them was a well with a silver bucket. Ivan Tsarevich drew water and gave the serpents to drink. They lay down then, and let him enter the castle. The Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom came out.

“It will soon be three years,” said she, “since mighty Whirlwind confined me here, and no Russian have I heard with hearing, or seen with sight; but now a Russian I see. Who art thou, good youth?”

“I am Ivan Tsarevich.”

“How didst thou happen hither, — with thy own will, or against thy will?”

“With my own will; I am in search of my mother. She went in the green garden to walk, Whirlwind came and bore her away, it is unknown whither. Canst thou not tell me where to find her?”

“No, I cannot; but not far from here lives my eldest sister, the Tsaritsa of the Golden Kingdom, Yelena the Beautiful, — maybe she will tell thee. Here is a silver ball, roll it ahead and follow; it will lead thee to the Golden Kingdom. But see, when thou hast killed Whirlwind, forget me not, poor woman; rescue me from this place, and take me to the free world. Whirlwind holds me captive, and flies hither



once in two months." Then she gave him a silver ring, saying, "In this ring is the whole Silver Kingdom."

Ivan rolled the ball; wherever it went he followed. Whether it was long or short, he saw a golden castle gleaming like fire; at the gate was a crowd of terrible serpents fastened to golden chains, and right there a well, at the well a golden bucket on a golden chain. Ivan Tsarevich drew water, and gave the serpents to drink; they lay down and were soothed. He entered the palace; Yelena the Beautiful met him.

"Who art thou, gallant youth?"

"I am Ivan Tsarevich."

"How hast thou come hither,—of thy own will, or against thy will?"

"I came of my own will; I am in search of my mother, Nastasya, Golden Tress. Knowest thou not where to find her?"

"Why should n't I know? She lives not far from here, Whirlwind flies to her once a week, and to me once a month. Here is a golden ball for thee: throw it ahead and follow,—it will lead thee to thy mother. And take besides this golden ring; in this ring is the whole Golden Kingdom. And be careful when thou hast conquered Whirlwind. Forget me not, poor woman; take me with thee to the free world."

"I will take thee," said he.

Ivan Tsarevich rolled the ball and followed after; he went and went till he came to such a palace that,



Lord save us! it was just blazing with diamonds and precious stones. At the gate six-headed serpents were hissing. Ivan Tsarevich gave them to drink; the serpents were soothed, and let him pass to the castle. He went through the great chambers, and in the most distant found his own mother. She was sitting on a lofty throne arrayed in Tsaritsa's robes and crowned with a costly crown. She looked at the stranger and cried: "Ah! is that thou, my dear son? How hast thou come hither?"

"So and so," said Ivan; "I have come for thee."

"Well, dear son, 't will be hard for thee. Here in these mountains reigns Whirlwind, the evil and mighty, all spirits obey him; he is the one that bore me away. Thou wilt have to fight him; come quickly to the cellar."

They went to the cellar; there were two tubs of water, one on the right, the other on the left hand. "Drink," said the Tsaritsa, "from the right-hand tub."

Ivan drank.

"Well, what strength is in thee?"

"I am so strong that I could turn the whole castle over with one hand."

"Then drink more."

Ivan drank again.

"What strength is in thee now?"

"If I wished, I could turn the whole world over."

"That is very great strength. Move these tubs



from one place to the other: put that on the right to the left, that on the left take to the right."

Ivan interchanged the tubs.

"Thou seest, my dear son, in one tub is water of strength, in the other water of weakness. Whoso drinks from the first will be a strong, mighty hero; whoso drinks from the second will grow weak altogether. Whirlwind always drinks the water of strength and puts it on the right side; so we must deceive him, or thou canst never overcome him."

They returned to the castle.

"Soon Whirlwind will fly home," said the Tsaritsa to Ivan Tsarevich. "Sit under my purple robe, so that he may not see thee; and when he comes and runs to embrace and kiss me, do thou seize his club. He will rise high, high; he will bear thee over seas, over precipices: but see to it, let not the club go out of thy hand. Whirlwind will grow tired, will want to drink the water of strength, will come down to the cellar and rush to the tub placed on the right hand; but do thou drink from the tub on the left. Then he will grow weak; wrest his sword from him, and with one blow hew off his head. When his head is off, that moment there will be voices behind thee crying, 'Strike again, strike again.' Strike not, my son, but say in answer, 'A hero's hand strikes not twice, but always once.'"

Ivan Tsarevich had barely hidden under the robe



when the court grew dark and everything trembled. Whirlwind flew home, struck the earth, became a brave hero, and entered the castle, in his hands a club.

“Tfu, tfu, tfu! somehow it smells of Russia here. Was any one visiting?”

“I don’t know why it seems so to thee,” said the Tsaritsa.

Whirlwind rushed to embrace her; but Ivan that moment seized the club.

“I’ll eat thee!” shouted Whirlwind.

“Well, grandmother spoke double; either thou wilt eat, or thou wilt not.”

Whirlwind tore out through the window and up to the sky; he bore Ivan Tsarevich away. Over mountains he said, “I will smash thee;” over seas he said, “I will drown thee.” But Ivan did not let the club out of his hands. Whirlwind flew over the whole world, wearied himself out, and began to sink. He came down straight into the cellar, rushed to the tub on the right hand, and fell to drinking the water of weakness; but Ivan ran to the left, drank his fill of the water of strength, and became the first mighty hero in the whole world. He saw that Whirlwind had become utterly weak, wrested the sharp sword from him, and cut off his head with a blow. Voices cried behind, “Strike again, strike again, or he will come to life!” “No,” said Ivan; “a hero’s hand strikes not twice, but always finishes at a blow.”



Straightway he made a fire, burned the body and the head, scattered the ashes to the wind.

The mother of Ivan Tsarevich was glad. "Now, my dear son," said she, "let us rejoice. We will eat; and then for home with all speed, for it is wearisome here, — there are no people."

"But who serves thee?"

"Thou wilt see directly."

They had barely thought of eating, when a table set itself, and various meats and wines appeared on the table of themselves. The Tsaritsa and the Tsarevich dined. Meanwhile unseen musicians played wonderful songs for them. They ate and drank, and when they had rested, Ivan said, —

"Let us go, mother, it is time; for under the mountains my brothers are waiting. And on the road I must save three Tsaritsas who are living in Whirlwind's castles."

They took everything needful and set out on the journey. They went first to the Tsaritsa of the Golden Kingdom, then to her sisters of the Silver and Copper Kingdoms. They took them, and brought linen and all kinds of stuffs. In a short time they reached the place where they had to go down the mountain.

Ivan Tsarevich let his mother down first on the linen, then Yelena the Beautiful and her two sisters. The brothers were standing below waiting, and they thought to themselves, "Let us leave Ivan Tsarevich



up there; we will take our mother and the three Tsaritsas to our father, and say that we found them." "I'll take Yelena the Beautiful for myself," said Pyotr Tsarevich; "thou, Vassili, wilt have the Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom; and we will give the Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom to some general."

When it was time for Ivan Tsarevich to come down from the mountain, his elder brothers seized the linen, pulled and tore it away. Ivan remained on the mountain. What could he do? He wept bitterly; then turned back, walked and walked over the Copper Kingdom, over the Silver Kingdom and the Golden Kingdom, — not a soul did he see. He came to the Diamond Kingdom, — no one there either. What was he to do alone, — deathly weariness! He looked around; on the window of the castle a whistle was lying. He took it in his hand. "Let me play from weariness," said he. He had barely blown when out sprang *Lame and Crooked*.

"What is thy pleasure?"

Said Ivan Tsarevich, "I want to eat." That moment, from wherever it came, a table was set, and on the table the very best food. Ivan Tsarevich ate and thought, "Now it would not be bad to rest." He blew on the whistle. *Lame and Crooked* appeared.

"What is thy pleasure, Ivan Tsarevich?"

"That a bed be ready." The word was n't out of



his mouth when the bed was ready. He lay down, slept splendidly, then whistled again.

“What is thy pleasure?” asked Lame and Crooked.

“Everything can be done, then?”

“Everything is possible, Ivan Tsarevich. Whoever blows that whistle, we will do everything for him. As we served Whirlwind before, so we are glad to serve thee now; it is only necessary to keep the whistle by thee at all times.”

“Well,” said Ivan, “let me be in my own kingdom this minute.”

He had barely spoken when he appeared in his own kingdom, in the middle of the market square. He was walking along the square, when a shoemaker came toward him, — such a jolly fellow! The Tsarevich asked: “Whither art thou going, good man?”

“I am taking shoes to sell; I am a shoemaker.”

“Take me into thy service,” said Ivan.

“Dost thou know how to make shoes?”

“Yes, I can do everything. I can make not only shoes, but clothes.”

“Well, come on.”

They went to his house. The shoemaker said: “Go to work; here is leather for thee, — the best kind; I’ll see what skill thou hast.”

Ivan Tsarevich went to his own room, and took out the whistle. Lame and Crooked came. “What is thy pleasure, Ivan Tsarevich?”

“To have shoes ready by to-morrow.”



“ Oh, that is not work, that is play ! ”

“ Here is the leather.”

“ What sort of leather is that? That’s trash, nothing more; that should go out of the window.”

Next morning Ivan Tsarevich woke up; on the table were beautiful shoes, the very best.

The shoemaker rose. “ Well, young man, hast thou made the shoes? ”

“ They are finished.”

“ Well, show them.” He looked at the shoes and was astonished. “ See what a man I have got for myself, — not a shoemaker, but a wonder ! ” He took the shoes and carried them to the market to sell.

At that same time three weddings were in preparation at the palace. Pyotr Tsarevich was to marry Yelena the Beautiful, Vassili Tsarevich the Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom, and they were giving the Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom to a general. They were making dresses for those weddings. Yelena the Beautiful wanted shoes. Our shoemaker’s shoes were better than all the others brought to the palace.

When Yelena looked at them she said, “ What does this mean? They make shoes like these only in the mountains.” She paid the shoemaker a large price and said, “ Make me without measure another pair wonderfully sewed, ornamented with precious stones, and studded with diamonds. They must be ready by to-morrow; if not, to the gallows with thee.”



The shoemaker took the precious stones and money and went home, — such a gloomy man! “Misery,” said he, “what am I to do now? How can I make shoes by to-morrow, and besides without measure? It is clear that they will hang me to-morrow; let me have at least a last frolic with my friends.”

He went to the inn. These friends of his were numerous; they asked, “Why art thou so gloomy, brother?”

“Oh, my dear friends,” answered he, “they are going to hang me to-morrow!”

“Why so?”

The shoemaker told his trouble. “How think of work in such a position? Better I’ll frolic to-night for the last time.”

So they drank and drank, frolicked and frolicked; the shoemaker was staggering already.

“Well,” said he, “I’ll take home a keg of spirits, lie down to sleep; and to-morrow when they come to hang me, I’ll drink a gallon and a half right away. Let them hang me without my senses.”

He came home. “Well, thou reprobate!” said he to Ivan Tsarevich, “see what thy shoes have done . . . so and so . . . When they come in the morning for me, wake me up.”

In the night Ivan Tsarevich took out the whistle and blew. Lame and Crooked appeared. “What is thy pleasure, Ivan Tsarevich?”

“That shoes of such a kind be ready.”



“ We obey ! ”

Ivan lay down to sleep. Next morning he woke up; the shoes were on the table shining like fire. He went to rouse his master.

“ It is time to rise, master.”

“ What! have they come for me? Bring the keg quickly! Here is a cup, pour the spirits in; let them hang me drunk.”

“ But the shoes are made.”

“ How made? Where are they? ”

The master ran and saw them. “ But when did we make them? ”

“ In the night. Is it possible that thou dost not remember when we cut and sewed? ”

“ Oh, I’ve slept so long, brother! I barely, barely remember.”

He took the shoes, wrapped them up, and ran to the palace.

Yelena the Beautiful saw the shoes and knew what had happened. “ Surely,” she thought, “ the spirits made these for Ivan Tsarevich. — How didst thou make these? ” asked she of the shoemaker.

“ Oh! I know how to do everything.”

“ If that is the case, make me a wedding robe embroidered with gold, ornamented with diamonds and precious stones; let it be ready to-morrow morning: if not, off with thy head! ”

The shoemaker went home again gloomy, and his friends were long waiting for him. “ Well, what is it? ”



“Nothing but cursedness. The destroyer of Christian people has come; she commanded me to make her a robe with gold and precious stones by to-morrow morning: and what sort of a tailor am I? They will take my head surely to-morrow.”

“Ah! brother, the morning is wiser than the evening; let us go and frolic.”

They went to the inn, they drank and frolicked; the shoemaker got tipsy again, brought home a whole keg of spirits, and said to Ivan Tsarevich: “Now, young fellow, when thou wilt rouse me in the morning I’ll toss off three gallons; let them cut the head off me drunk. I could n’t make such a robe in a lifetime.” The shoemaker lay down to sleep and snored.

Ivan Tsarevich blew on the whistle, and Lame and Crooked appeared. “What is thy pleasure, Tsarevich?”

“That a robe be ready by to-morrow morning exactly such as Yelena the Beautiful wore in Whirlwind’s house.”

“We obey; it will be ready.”

Ivan Tsarevich woke at daylight; the robe was on the table, shining like fire, so that the whole chamber was lighted up. Then he roused his master, who rubbed his eyes and asked, “What! have they come to cut my head off? Give the spirits here this minute.”

“But the robe is ready.”

“Is that true? When did we make it?”



“In the night, of course; dost thou not remember cutting it thyself?”

“Ah, brother, I just remember, — see it as in a dream!”

The shoemaker took the robe and ran to the palace.

Yelena the Beautiful gave him much money and the command, “See that to-morrow by daylight the Golden Kingdom be on the sea, seven versts from shore, and from it to our palace let there be a golden bridge with costly velvet spread upon it, and at the railings on both sides let wonderful trees be growing, and let there be wonderful song-birds singing, with various voices. If thou wilt not have it done by morning, I’ll give orders to quarter thee.”

The shoemaker went from Yelena the Beautiful with drooping head. His friends met him. “Well, brother?”

“What well! I am lost; to-morrow I shall be quartered. She gave me such a task that no devil could do it.”

“Oh, never mind! the morning is wiser than the evening; let us go to the inn.”

“Well, let us go; at the last parting we must have a carousal at least.”

They drank and drank; and towards evening the shoemaker drank so much they had to lead him home. “Farewell, young fellow,” said he to Ivan; “to-morrow they will put me to death.”

“But has a new task been given?”



“Yes, so and so, so and so.” He lay down and snored; but Ivan Tsarevich went straight to his room, and blew on the whistle. Lame and Crooked appeared.

“What is thy pleasure, Ivan Tsarevich?”

“Can ye do me such a work as this?”

“Ivan Tsarevich, this is a work indeed. But there is no avoiding it; toward morning all will be ready.”

When daylight began to come, Ivan woke up, looked out of the window. Fathers! everything was ready as asked for. A golden castle was gleaming like fire. He roused his master, who sprang up. “Well, have they come for me? Give the keg here this minute!”

“But the palace is ready.”

“What dost thou say?”

The shoemaker looked through the window and said, “Ah!” in astonishment, “how was that done?”

“Dost thou not remember how thou and I fixed it?”

“Yes, it is clear that I have slept too soundly; I barely, barely remember.”

They ran to the golden castle; in it was wealth untold, unseen.

Said Ivan Tsarevich: “Here, master, is a wing, go and dust the railing of the bridge; and if they come and ask who lives in the palace, say thou nothing, but give this letter.”

“Very well.”



The shoemaker went to dust the railing of the bridge.

In the morning Yelena the Beautiful woke up; she saw the golden castle, and ran straight to the Tsar. "See what is done in our place! There is a golden palace on the sea, and from that palace a golden bridge seven versts long; and on both sides of the bridge wonderful trees are growing, and song-birds are singing in various voices."

The Tsar sent immediately to ask what that meant? Had not some hero come to his kingdom? The messengers came to the shoemaker, asked him. "I know not, but there is a letter to thy Tsar." In that letter Ivan Tsarevich related everything to his father as it was, — how he had liberated his mother, won Yelena the Beautiful, and how his elder brothers had deceived him. With the letter Ivan Tsarevich sent golden carriages, and begged the Tsar and Tsaritsa to come to him. Let Yelena the Beautiful and her sisters and his brothers be brought behind in simple wagons.

All assembled at once and started. Ivan Tsarevich met them with joy. The Tsar wished to put his elder sons to death for their untruths; but Ivan Tsarevich implored his father, and they were forgiven. Then began a mountain of a feast. Ivan Tsarevich married Yelena the Beautiful. They gave the Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom to Pyotr Tsarevich, the Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom to Vassili Tsarevich, and made the shoemaker a general.



## IVAN TSAREVICH, THE FIRE-BIRD, AND THE GRAY WOLF.

**I**N a certain kingdom, in a certain land, lived Tsar Vwislav Andronovich; he had three sons, — Dmitri Tsarevich, Vassili Tsarevich, and Ivan Tsarevich. Tsar Vwislav had a garden so rich that in no land was there better. In the garden grew many precious trees, with fruit and without fruit.

Tsar Vwislav had one favorite apple-tree, and on that tree grew apples all golden. The Fire-bird used to fly to the garden of Tsar Vwislav. She had wings of gold, and eyes like crystals of the East; and she used to fly to that garden every night, sit on the favorite apple-tree, pluck from it golden apples, and then fly away.

The Tsar grieved greatly over that apple-tree because the Fire-bird plucked from it many apples. Therefore he called his three sons and said: "My dear children, whichever one of you can catch the Fire-bird in my garden and take her alive, to him will I give during my life one half of the kingdom, and at my death I will give it all."

Then the sons cried out in one voice: "Gracious sovereign, our father, we will try with great pleasure to take the Fire-bird alive."



The first night Dmitri Tsarevich went to watch in the garden, and sat under the apple-tree from which the Fire-bird had been plucking the apples. He fell asleep, and did not hear the Fire-bird when she came, nor when she plucked many apples.

Next morning Tsar Vwislav called his son Dmitri Tsarevich, and asked, "Well, my dear son, hast thou seen the Fire-bird?"

"No, gracious sovereign, my father, she came not last night."

The next night Vassili Tsarevich went to the garden to watch the Fire-bird. He sat under the same apple-tree, and in a couple of hours fell asleep so soundly that he did not hear the Fire-bird when she came nor when she plucked apples.

Next morning Tsar Vwislav called him and asked, "Well, my dear son, hast thou seen the Fire-bird?"

"Gracious sovereign, my father, she came not last night."

The third night Ivan Tsarevich went to watch in the garden, and sat under the same apple-tree. He sat an hour, a second, and a third. All at once the whole garden was lighted up as if by many fires. The Fire-bird flew hither, perched on the apple-tree, and began to pluck apples. Ivan stole up to her so warily that he caught her tail, but could not hold the bird, she tore off, flew away; and there remained in the hand of Ivan Tsarevich but one feather of the tail, which he held very firmly.



Next morning, the moment Tsar Vwislav woke from his sleep, Ivan Tsarevich went to him and gave him the feather of the Fire-bird. The Tsar was greatly delighted that his youngest son had been able to get even one feather of the Fire-bird. This feather was so wonderful and bright that when carried into a dark chamber it shone as if a great multitude of tapers were lighted in that place. Tsar Vwislav put the feather in his cabinet as a thing to be guarded forever. From that time forth the Fire-bird flew to the garden no more.

Tsar Vwislav again called his sons, and said: "My dear children, I give you my blessing. Set out, find the Fire-bird, and bring her to me alive; and what I promised at first he will surely receive who brings me the bird."

Dmitri and Vassili Tsarevich began to cherish hatred against their youngest brother because he had pulled the feather from the tail of the Fire-bird. They took their father's blessing, and both went to find the Fire-bird. Ivan Tsarevich too began to beg his father's blessing. The Tsar said to him: "My dear son, my darling child, thou art still young, unused to such a long and difficult journey: why shouldst thou part from me? Thy brothers have gone; now, if thou goest too, and all three of you fail to return for a long time (I am old, and walk under God), and if during your absence the Lord takes my life, who would rule in my place? There



might be rebellion too, or disagreement among our people, — there would be no one to stop it; or if an enemy should invade our land, there would be no one to command our men.”

But no matter how the Tsar tried to detain Ivan Tsarevich, he could not avoid letting him go at his urgent prayer. Ivan Tsarevich took a blessing of his father, chose a horse, and rode away; he rode on, not knowing himself whither.

Riding by the path by the road, whether it was near or far, high or low, a tale is soon told, but a deed's not soon done. At last he came to the green meadows. In the open field a pillar stands, and on the pillar these words are written: “Whoever goes from the pillar straight forward will be hungry and cold; whoever goes to the right hand will be healthy and well, but his horse will be dead; whoever goes to the left hand will be killed himself, but his horse will be living and well.” Ivan read the inscription, and went to the right hand, holding in mind that though his horse might be killed, he would remain alive, and might in time get another horse.

He rode one day, a second, and a third. All at once an enormous gray wolf came out against him and said: “Oh! is that thou, tender youth, Ivan Tsarevich? Thou hast read on the pillar that thy horse will be dead: why hast thou come hither, then?” The wolf said these words, tore Ivan Tsarevich's horse in two, and went to one side.



Ivan grieved greatly for his horse. He cried bitterly, and went forward on foot. He walked all day, and was unspeakably tired. He was going to sit down and rest, when all at once the Gray Wolf caught up with him and said: "I am sorry for thee, Ivan Tsarevich, thou art tired from walking; I am sorry that I ate thy good steed. Well, sit on me, the old wolf, and tell me whither to bear thee, and why."

Ivan Tsarevich told the Gray Wolf whither he had to go, and the Gray Wolf shot ahead with him swifter than a horse. After a time, just at nightfall, he brought Ivan Tsarevich to a stone wall not very high, halted, and said: "Now, Ivan Tsarevich, come down from the Gray Wolf, climb over that stone wall; on the other side is a garden, and in the garden the Fire-bird, in a golden cage. Take the Fire-bird, but touch not the cage. If thou takest the cage, thou'lt not escape; they will seize thee straightway."

Ivan Tsarevich climbed over the wall into the garden, saw the Fire-bird in the golden cage, and was greatly tempted by the cage. He took the bird out, and was going back; but changed his mind, and thought, "Why have I taken the bird without the cage? Where can I put her?" He returned; but had barely taken down the cage when there was a hammering and thundering throughout the whole garden, for there were wires attached to the cage. The



watchmen woke up at that moment, ran to the garden, caught Ivan Tsarevich with the Fire-bird, and took him to the Tsar, who was called Dolmat. Tsar Dolmat was terribly enraged at Ivan, and shouted at him in loud, angry tones: "Is it not a shame for thee, young man, to steal? But who art thou, of what land, of what father a son, and how do they call thee by name?"

Ivan Tsarevich replied: "I am from Vwislav's kingdom, the son of Tsar Vwislav Andronovich, and they call me Ivan Tsarevich. Thy Fire-bird used to fly to our garden each night and pluck golden apples from my father's favorite apple-tree, and destroyed almost the whole tree. Therefore my father has sent me to find the Fire-bird and bring it to him."

"Oh, youthful young man, Ivan Tsarevich," said Tsar Dolmat, "is it fitting to do as thou hast done? Thou shouldst have come to me, and I would have given thee the Fire-bird with honor; but now will it be well for thee when I send to all lands to declare how dishonorably thou hast acted in my kingdom? Listen, however, Ivan Tsarevich. If thou wilt do me a service, — if thou wilt go beyond the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom and get for me from Tsar Afron the golden-maned steed, I will forgive thy offence and give thee the Fire-bird with great honor; if not, I will publish in all kingdoms that thou art a dishonorable thief."

Ivan Tsarevich went away from Tsar Dolmat in



great grief, promising to obtain for him the golden-maned steed.

He came to the Gray Wolf, and told him all that Tsar Dolmat had said.

“Oh! is that thou, youthful young man, Ivan Tsarevich? Why didst thou disobey my words and take the golden cage?”

“I have offended in thy sight,” said Ivan to the Gray Wolf.

“Well, let that go; sit on me, and I will take thee wherever thou wilt.”

Ivan Tsarevich sat on the back of the Gray Wolf. The wolf was as swift as an arrow, and ran, whether it was long or short, till he came at last to the kingdom of Tsar Afron in the night-time. Coming to the white-walled stables, the Gray Wolf said: “Go, Ivan Tsarevich, into these white-walled stables (the grooms on guard are sleeping soundly), and take the golden-maned steed. On the wall hangs a golden bridle; but take not the bridle, or it will go ill with thee.”

Ivan Tsarevich entered the white-walled stables, took the steed, and was coming back; but he saw on the walls the golden bridle, and was so tempted that he took it from the nail. That moment there went a thunder and a noise throughout the stables, because strings were tied to the bridle. The grooms on guard woke up that moment, rushed in, seized Ivan Tsarevich, and took him to Tsar Afron. Tsar Afron began to question him. “Oh, youthful young man,



tell me from what land thou art, of what father a son, and how do they call thee by name?"

To this Ivan Tsarevich replied: "I am from Vwislav's kingdom, the son of Tsar Vwislav, and they call me Ivan Tsarevich."

"Oh, youthful young man, Ivan Tsarevich!" said Tsar Afron, "was that which thou hast done the deed of an honorable knight? I would have given thee the golden-maned steed with honor. But now will it be well for thee when I send to all lands a declaration of how dishonorably thou hast acted in my kingdom? Hear me, however, Ivan Tsarevich: if thou wilt do me a service and go beyond the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom and bring to me Princess Yelena the Beautiful, with whom I am in love heart and soul for a long time, but whom I cannot obtain, I will pardon thy offence and give thee the golden-maned steed with honor. And if thou wilt not do me this service, I will declare in all lands that thou art a dishonorable thief.

Ivan Tsarevich promised Tsar Afron to bring Yelena the Beautiful, left the palace, and fell to crying bitterly.

He came to the Gray Wolf and told him all that had happened.

"Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, thou youthful young man," said the Gray Wolf, "why didst thou disobey me and take the golden bridle?"

"I have offended in thy sight," said Ivan Tsarevich.



“Well, let that go,” replied the Wolf. “Sit on me; I will take thee wherever need be.”

Ivan Tsarevich sat on the back of the Gray Wolf, who ran as swiftly as an arrow flies, and he ran in such fashion as to be told in a tale no long time; and at last he came to the kingdom of Yelena the Beautiful. Coming to the golden fence which surrounded her wonderful garden, the Wolf said: “Now, Ivan Tsarevich, come down from me and go back by the same road along which we came and wait in the field, under the green oak.”

Ivan Tsarevich went where he was commanded. But the Gray Wolf sat near the golden fence, and waited till Yelena the Beautiful should walk in the garden.

Toward evening, when the sun was sinking low in the west, therefore, it was not very warm in the air, Princess Yelena went to walk in the garden with her maidens and court ladies. When she entered the garden and approached the place where the Gray Wolf was sitting behind the fence, he jumped out suddenly, caught the princess, sprang back again, and bore her away with all his power and might. He came to the green oak in the open field where Ivan Tsarevich was waiting, and said, “Ivan Tsarevich, sit on me quickly.” Ivan sat on him, and the Gray Wolf bore them both along swiftly to the kingdom of Tsar Afron.

The nurses and maidens and all the court ladies who had been walking in the garden with the prin-



cess Yelena the Beautiful ran straightway to the palace and sent pursuers to overtake the Gray Wolf; but no matter how they ran, they could not overtake him, and turned back.

Ivan Tsarevich while sitting on the Gray Wolf with princess Yelena the Beautiful came to love her with his heart, and she Ivan Tsarevich; and when the Gray Wolf arrived at the kingdom of Tsar Afron, and Ivan Tsarevich had to take Yelena the Beautiful to the palace and give her to Tsar Afron, he grew very sad, and began to weep tearfully.

“What art thou weeping for, Ivan Tsarevich?” asked the Gray Wolf.

“My friend, why should I, good youth, not weep? I have formed a heartfelt love for Yelena the Beautiful, and now I must give her to Tsar Afron for the golden-maned steed; and if I yield her not, then Tsar Afron will dishonor me in all lands.”

“I have served thee much, Ivan Tsarevich,” said the Gray Wolf, “and I will do yet this service. Listen to me. I will turn myself into a princess, Yelena the Beautiful. Do thou give me to Tsar Afron and take from him the golden-maned steed; he will think me the real princess. And when thou art sitting on the steed and riding far away, I will beg of Tsar Afron permission to walk in the open field. When he lets me go with the maidens and nurses and all the court ladies, and I am with them in the open field, remember me, and I will come to thee.”



The Gray Wolf spoke these words, struck the damp earth, and became a princess, Yelena the Beautiful, so that it was not possible in any way to know that the wolf was not the princess. Ivan Tsarevich told Yelena the Beautiful to wait outside the town, and took the Gray Wolf to the palace of Tsar Afron.

When Ivan Tsarevich came with the pretended Yelena the Beautiful, Tsar Afron was greatly delighted in his heart that he had received a treasure which he had long desired. He took the false maiden, and gave Ivan Tsarevich the golden-maned steed.

Ivan Tsarevich mounted the steed and rode out of the town, seated Yelena the Beautiful with him, and rode on, holding his way toward the kingdom of Tsar Dolmat.

The Gray Wolf lived with Tsar Afron a day, a second, and a third, instead of Yelena the Beautiful. On the fourth day he went to Tsar Afron, begging to go out in the open field to walk, to drive away cruel grief and sorrow. Then Tsar Afron said: "Oh, my beautiful princess Yelena, I will do everything for thee; I will let thee go to the open field to walk!" And straightway he commanded the nurses, the maidens, and all the court ladies to go to the open field and walk with the beautiful princess.

Ivan Tsarevich was riding along his road and path with Yelena the Beautiful, talking with her; and he



had forgotten about the Gray Wolf, but afterward remembered. "Oh, where is my Gray Wolf?"

All at once, from wherever he came, the wolf stood before Ivan, and said: "Ivan Tsarevich, sit on me, the Gray Wolf, and let the beautiful princess ride on the golden-maned steed."

Ivan Tsarevich sat on the Gray Wolf, and they went toward the kingdom of Tsar Dolmat. Whether they journeyed long or short, when they had come to the kingdom they stopped about three versts from the capital town; and Ivan Tsarevich began to implore: "Listen to me, Gray Wolf, my dear friend. Thou hast shown me many a service, show me the last one now; and the last one is this: Couldst thou not turn to a golden-maned steed instead of this one? for I do not like to part with this horse."

Suddenly the Gray Wolf struck the damp earth and became a golden-maned steed. Ivan Tsarevich, leaving princess Yelena in the green meadow, sat on the Gray Wolf and went to the palace of Tsar Dolmat. The moment he came, Tsar Dolmat saw that Ivan Tsarevich was riding on the golden-maned steed, and he rejoiced greatly. Straightway he went out of the palace, met the Tsarevich in the broad court, kissed him, took him by the right hand, and led him into the white stone chambers. Tsar Dolmat on the occasion of such joy gave orders for a feast, and they sat at the oaken table at the spread cloth. They ate, they drank, they amused themselves, and



rejoiced exactly two days; and on the third day Tsar Dolmat gave Ivan Tsarevich the Fire-bird together with the golden cage. Ivan took the Fire-bird, went outside the town, sat on the golden-maned steed together with Yelena the Beautiful, and went toward his own native place, toward the kingdom of Tsar Vwislav.

Tsar Dolmat the next day thought to take a ride through the open field on his golden-maned steed. He ordered them to saddle him; he sat on the horse, and rode to the open field. The moment he urged the horse, the horse threw Tsar Dolmat off his back, became the Gray Wolf as before, ran off, and came up with Ivan Tsarevich. "Ivan Tsarevich," said he, "sit on me, the Gray Wolf, and let Yelena the Beautiful ride on the golden-maned steed."

Ivan sat on the Gray Wolf, and they went their way. When the Gray Wolf had brought Ivan to the place where he had torn his horse, he stopped and said: "I have served thee sufficiently, with faith and truth. On this spot I tore thy horse in two; to this spot I have brought thee. Come down from me, the Gray Wolf: thou hast a golden-maned steed; sit on him, and go wherever thou hast need. I am no longer thy servant."

The Gray Wolf said these words and ran to one side. Ivan wept bitterly for the Gray Wolf, and went on with the beautiful princess.

Whether he rode long or short with the beautiful



princess, when he was within twenty versts of his own kingdom he stopped, dismounted, and he and the beautiful princess rested from the heat of the sun under a tree; he tied the golden-maned steed to the same tree, and put the cage of the Fire-bird by his side. Lying on the soft grass, they talked pleasantly, and fell soundly asleep.

At that time the brothers of Ivan Tsarevich, Dmitri and Vassili Tsarevich, after travelling through many lands without finding the Fire-bird, were on their way home with empty hands, and came unexpectedly upon their brother with the beautiful princess. Seeing the golden-maned steed and the Fire-bird in the cage, they were greatly tempted, and thought of killing their brother Ivan. Dmitri took his own sword out of the scabbard, stabbed Ivan Tsarevich, and cut him to pieces; then he roused the beautiful princess and asked: "Beautiful maiden, of what land art thou, of what father a daughter, and how do they call thee by name?"

The beautiful princess, seeing Ivan Tsarevich dead, was terribly frightened; she began to shed bitter tears, and in her tears she said: "I am Princess Yelena the Beautiful; Ivan Tsarevich, whom ye have given to a cruel death, got me. If ye were good knights, ye would have gone with him into the open field and conquered him there; but ye killed him when asleep; and what fame will ye receive for yourselves? A sleeping man is the same as a dead one."



Then Dmitri Tsarevich put his sword to the heart of Yelena the Beautiful and said: "Hear me, Yelena the Beautiful, thou art now in our hands; we will take thee to our father, Tsar Vwislav, thou wilt tell him that we got thee and the Fire-bird and the golden-maned steed. If not, we will give thee to death this minute." The princess, afraid of death, promised them, and swore by everything sacred that she would speak as commanded. Then they began to cast lots who should have Yelena the Beautiful, and who the golden-maned steed; and the lot fell that the princess should go to Vassili, and the golden-maned steed to Dmitri.

Then Vassili Tsarevich took the princess, and placed her on his horse; Dmitri sat on the golden-maned steed, and took the Fire-bird to give to their father, Tsar Vwislav; and they went their way.

Ivan Tsarevich lay dead on that spot exactly thirty days; then the Gray Wolf ran up, knew Ivan by his odor, wanted to aid him, to bring him to life, but knew not how. Just then the Gray Wolf saw a raven with two young ones who were flying above the body and wanted to eat the flesh of Ivan Tsarevich. The wolf hid behind a bush; and when the young ravens had come down and were ready to eat the body, he sprang out, caught one, and was going to tear it in two. Then the raven came down, sat a little way from the Gray Wolf, and said: "Oh, Gray Wolf, touch not my young child; it has done nothing to thee!"



“Listen to me, raven,” said the Gray Wolf. “I will not touch thy child; I will let it go unharmed and well if thou wilt do me a service. Fly beyond the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom, and bring me the water of death and the water of life.”

“I will do that, but touch not my son.” Having said these words, the raven flew away and soon disappeared from sight. On the third day the raven returned, bringing two vials, in one the water of life, in the other the water of death, and gave them both to the Gray Wolf. The wolf took the vials, tore the young raven in two, sprinkled it with the water of death; the little raven grew together, he sprinkled it with the water of life, and the raven sprang up and flew away.

The Gray Wolf sprinkled Ivan Tsarevich with the water of death: the body grew together; he sprinkled it with the water of life: Ivan Tsarevich stood up and exclaimed, “Oh, how long I have slept!”

“Thou wouldst have slept forever, had it not been for me. Thy brothers cut thee to pieces and carried off Princess Yelena with the golden-maned steed and the Fire-bird. Now hurry with all speed to thy own country; Vassili Tsarevich will marry thy bride to-day. To reach home quickly, sit on me; I will bear thee.”

Ivan sat on the Gray Wolf; the wolf ran with him to the kingdom of Tsar Vwislav, and whether it was long or short, he ran to the edge of the town.



Ivan sprang from the Gray Wolf, walked into the town, and found that his brother Vassili had married Yelena the Beautiful, had returned with her from the ceremony, and was sitting with her at the feast.

Ivan Tsarevich entered the palace; and when Yelena the Beautiful saw him, she sprang up from the table, kissed him, and cried out: "This is my dear bridegroom, Ivan Tsarevich, and not that scoundrel at the table."

Then Tsar Vwislav rose from his place and asked the meaning of these words. Yelena the Beautiful told the whole truth, — told how Ivan Tsarevich had won her, the golden-maned steed, and the Fire-bird; how his elder brother had killed him while asleep; and how they had terrified her into saying that they had won everything.

Tsar Vwislav was terribly enraged at Dmitri and Vassili, and cast them into prison; but Ivan Tsarevich married Yelena the Beautiful, and lived with her in harmony and love, so that one of them could not exist a single minute without the other.



IVAN THE PEASANT'S SON AND THE LITTLE  
MAN HIMSELF ONE-FINGER TALL, HIS  
MUSTACHE SEVEN VERSTS IN LENGTH.

**I**N a certain kingdom in a certain land there lived a Tsar, and in the courtyard of the Tsar was a pillar, and in the pillar three rings, one gold, one silver, and the third copper. One night the Tsar dreamed that there was a horse tied to the gold ring, that every hair on him was silver, and the clear moon was on his forehead. In the morning the Tsar rose up and ordered it to be proclaimed that whoever could interpret the dream and get the horse for him, to that man would he give his daughter, and one half the kingdom in addition.

At the summons of the Tsar a multitude of princes, boyars, and all kinds of lords assembled. No man could explain the dream; no man would undertake to get the horse. At last they explained to the Tsar that such and such a poor man had a son Ivan, who could interpret the dream and get the horse.

The Tsar commanded them to summon Ivan. They summoned him. The Tsar asked, "Canst thou explain my dream and get the horse?"

"Tell me first," answered Ivan, "what the dream was, and what horse thou dost need."



The Tsar said: "Last night I dreamed that a horse was tied to the gold ring in my courtyard; every hair on him was silver, and on his forehead the clear moon."

"That is not a dream, but a reality; for last night the twelve-headed serpent came to thee on that horse and wanted to steal thy daughter."

"Is it possible to get that horse?"

"It is," answered Ivan; "but only when my fifteenth year is passed."

Ivan was then but twelve years old. The Tsar took him to his court, gave him food and drink till his fifteenth year.

When his fifteenth year had passed, Ivan said to the Tsar: "Now give me a horse on which I can ride to the place where the serpent is."

The Tsar led him to his stables and showed him all his horses; but he could not find a single one, by reason of his strength and weight. When he placed his hero's hand on any horse, that horse fell to the ground; and he said to the Tsar: "Let me go to the open country to seek a horse of sufficient strength."

The Tsar let him go. Ivan the peasant's son looked for three years; nowhere could he find a horse. He was returning to the Tsar in tears, when an old man happened to meet him, and asked, "Why dost thou weep, young man?"

To this question Ivan answered rudely; just chased the old man away.



The old man said: "Look out, young fellow; do not speak ill."

Ivan went away a little from the old man, and thought, "Why have I offended the old man? Old people know much."

He returned, caught up with the old man, fell down before him, and said: "Grandfather, forgive me! I offended thee through grief. This is what I am crying about: three years have I travelled through the open country among many herds; nowhere can I find a horse to suit me."

The old man said: "Go to such a village; there in the stable of a poor peasant is a mare; that mare has a mangy colt; take the colt and feed him, — he will be strong enough for thee."

Ivan bowed down to the old man, and went to the village; went straight to the peasant's stable; saw the mare with the mangy colt, on which he put his hands. The colt did not quiver in the least. Ivan took him from the peasant, fed him some time, came to the Tsar, and said that he had a horse. Then he began to make ready to visit the serpent.

The Tsar asked: "How many men dost thou need, Ivan?"

"I need no men," replied Ivan; "I can get the horse alone. Thou mightest give me perhaps half a dozen to send on messages."

The Tsar gave him six men; they made ready and set out. Whether they travelled long or short it is



unknown to any man; only this is known, — that they came to a fiery river. Over the river was a bridge; near the river an enormous forest. In that forest they pitched a tent, got many things to drink, and began to eat and make merry.

Ivan the peasant's son said to his comrades: "Let us stand guard every night in turn, and see if any man passes the river."

It happened that when any of Ivan's comrades went on guard, each one of them got drunk in the evening and could see nothing. At last Ivan himself went on guard; and just at midnight he saw that a three-headed serpent was crossing the river, and the serpent called, "I have no enemy, no calumniator, unless one enemy and one calumniator, Ivan the peasant's son; but the raven has n't brought his bones in a bladder yet."

Ivan the peasant's son sprang from under the bridge. "Thou liest; I am here!"

"If thou art here, then let us make trial;" and the serpent on horseback advanced against Ivan. But Ivan went forth on foot, gave a blow with his sabre, and cut off the three heads of the serpent, took the horse for himself, and tied him to the tent.

The next night Ivan the peasant's son killed the six-headed serpent, the third night the nine-headed one, and threw them into the fiery river. When he went on guard the fourth night the twelve-headed serpent came, and began to speak wrathfully. "Who



art thou, Ivan the peasant's son? Come out this minute to me! Why didst thou kill my sons?"

Ivan the peasant's son slipped out and said: "Let me go first to my tent, and then I will fight with thee."

"Well, go on."

Ivan ran to his comrades. "Here, boys, is a bowl, look into it; when it shall be filled with blood, come to me."

He returned and stood against the serpent; they rushed and struck each other. Ivan at the first blow cut four heads off the serpent, but went himself to his knees in the earth; when they met the second time, Ivan cut three heads off and sank to his waist in the earth; the third time they met he cut off three more heads, and sank to his breast in the earth; at last he cut off one head, and sank to his neck in the earth. Then only did his comrades think of him; they looked, and saw that the blood was running over the edge of the bowl. They hastened out, cut off the last head of the serpent, and pulled Ivan out of the earth. Ivan took the serpent's horse and led him to the tent.

Night passed, morning came; the good youth began to eat, drink, and be merry. Ivan the peasant's son rose up from the merry-making and said to his comrades, "Do ye wait here." He turned into a cat, and went along the bridge over the fiery river, came to the house where the serpents used to live,



and began to make friends with the cats there. In the house there remained alive only the old mother of the serpents and her three daughters-in-law; they were sitting in the chamber talking to one another. "How could we destroy that scoundrel, that Ivan the peasant's son?"

The youngest daughter-in-law said: "I'll bring hunger on the road, and turn myself into an apple-tree, so that when he eats an apple it will tear him to pieces in a moment."

The second daughter-in-law said: "I will bring thirst on the road, and turn myself into a well; let him try to drink."

The eldest said: "I'll bring sleep and make a bed of myself; let Ivan try to lie down, he'll die in a minute."

At last the old woman said: "I'll open my mouth from earth to sky and swallow them all."

Ivan heard what they said, went out of the chamber, turned into a man, and went back to his comrades. "Now, boys, make ready for the road."

They made ready, went their way, and to begin with a terrible hunger appeared on the road, so that they had nothing to eat. They saw an apple-tree. Ivan's comrades wanted to pluck the apples, but Ivan would not let them. "That is not an apple-tree," said he; and began to slash at it: blood came out. Another time thirst came upon them. Ivan saw a well; he would not let them drink from it; he began to slash



at it: blood came forth. Then sleep came on them; there was a bed on the road. Ivan cut it to pieces. They came to the jaws stretched from the earth to the sky. What was to be done? They thought of jumping through on a run. No man was able to jump through save Ivan; and he was borne out of the trouble by his wonderful steed, every hair of which was silver, and the bright moon on his forehead.

He came to a river; at the river was a hut; there he was met by a little man, himself one finger tall, his mustache seven versts in length, who said: "Give me the horse; and if thou wilt not give him quietly, I'll take him by force."

Ivan answered: "Leave me, cursed reptile, or I'll crush thee under the horse."

The little man himself, one finger tall, his mustache seven versts in length, knocked him on to the ground, sat on the horse, and rode away. Ivan went into the hut and grieved greatly for his horse. In the hut was lying on the stove a footless, handless man, and he said to Ivan: "Listen, good hero, — I know not how to call thee by name. Why didst thou try to fight with him? I was something more of a hero than thou, and still he gnawed my hands and feet off."

"Why?"

"Because I ate bread on his table."

Ivan began to ask how he could win his horse back. The footless, handless said, —

"Go to such a river and take the ferry, ferry for



three years, take money from no man: then thou mayest win the horse back."

Ivan bowed down to him, went to the river, took the ferry, and ferried three whole years for nothing. Once it happened to him to ferry over three old men; they offered him money, he would not take it.

"Tell me, good hero, why thou takest no money?"

He said, "According to a promise."

"What promise?"

"A malicious man took my horse, and good people told me to take the ferry for three years, and receive money from no man."

The old men said: "If thou choosest, Ivan, we are ready to help thee to get back thy horse."

"Help me, my friends."

The old men were not common people; they were the Freezer, the Devourer, and the Wizard. The Wizard went out on the shore, made the picture of a boat in the sand and said: "Well, brothers, you see this boat?"

"We see it."

"Sit in it."

All four sat in the boat.

The Wizard said: "Now, light little boat, do me a service as thou didst do before."

Straightway the boat rose in the air, and in a flash, just like an arrow sent from a bow, it brought them to a great stony mountain. At that mountain stood a house, and in the house lived the little man,—



himself one finger tall, his mustache seven versts in length. The old men sent Ivan to ask for the horse. Ivan began to ask.

The little man said: "Steal the Tsar's daughter and bring her to me; then I'll give thee the horse."

Ivan told this to his comrades. They left him at once and went to the Tsar. The Tsar knew what they had come for, and commanded his servants to heat the bath red hot. "Let them suffocate there," said he. Then he asked his guests to the bath. They thanked him and went. The Wizard commanded the Freezer to go first. The Freezer went into the bath and made it cool. Then they washed and steamed themselves, and came to the Tsar. He ordered a great dinner to be given, and a multitude of all kinds of food was on the table. The Devourer began and ate everything. In the night they came together, stole the Tsar's daughter, and brought her to the little man himself, one finger tall, his mustache seven versts in length. They gave him the Tsar's daughter and got the horse.

Ivan bowed down to the old men, sat on the horse, and went to the Tsar. He travelled and travelled, stopped in an open field to rest, put up his tent, and lay down. He woke up, threw out his hand, the Tsar's daughter was by him; he was delighted, and asked, "How didst thou come here?"

"I turned into a pin, and stuck myself into thy collar."



That moment she turned into a pin again. Ivan stuck her into his collar and travelled on; came to the Tsar. The Tsar saw the wondrous horse, received the good hero with honor, and told how his daughter had been stolen.

Ivan said: "Do not grieve, I have brought her back."

He went into the next chamber; the Tsarevna turned into a fair maiden. Ivan took her by the hand and brought her to the Tsar.

The Tsar was still more rejoiced. He took the horse for himself, and gave his daughter to Ivan. Ivan is living yet with his young wife.



THE FEATHER OF BRIGHT FINIST THE  
FALCON.

THERE lived an old man with his old wife. They had three daughters. The youngest was such a beauty that she could neither be told of in a tale nor described with a pen. Once the old man was going to town to the fair, and he said: "My dear daughters, say what ye want; I will buy all ye wish at the fair."

The eldest said, "Father, buy me a new dress." The second said, "Father, buy me a shawl kerchief." But the youngest said, "Buy me a red flower."

The old man laughed at his youngest daughter. "Oh, little dunce! what dost thou want of a red flower? Great good in it for thee; better I'll buy thee clothes."

No matter what he said, he could not persuade her. "Buy me a little red flower, nothing but that." The old man went to the fair, bought the eldest daughter a dress, the second a shawl kerchief; but in the whole town he could not find a red flower. Only as he was coming home did an unknown old man happen in his way. The old man had a red flower in his hand. "Sell me thy flower, old man."



“It is not for sale, it is reserved. If thy youngest daughter will marry my son, Bright Finist the Falcon, I will give the flower as a gift.”

The father grew thoughtful. Not to take the flower was to grieve his daughter, and to take it was to give her in marriage, God knows to whom! He thought and thought; still he took the flower. “What harm?” said he to himself; “they will come with proposals by and by. If he is not the right man, why, we can refuse.” He came home, gave the eldest daughter her dress, the second her shawl, and to the youngest he gave the flower, saying, “I like not thy flower, my dear daughter; greatly I like it not.” And then he whispered in her ear: “The flower was reserved, and not for sale. I took it from a strange man for the promise to give thee in marriage to his son, Bright Finist the Falcon.”

“Be not troubled, father, he is so good and kind; he flies as a bright falcon in the sky, and when he strikes the damp earth he is a hero of heroes.”

“But dost thou know him?”

“I know him, father. Last Sunday he was at Mass, and looked at me all the time. I talked to him — he loves me, father.”

The old man shook his head, looked at his daughter very sharply, made the sign of the cross on her, and said: “Go to thy room, my dear daughter, it is time to sleep. The morning is wiser than the evening; we will talk this matter over hereafter.”



The daughter shut herself up in her room, put the red flower in water, opened the window, and looked into the blue distance. Wherever he came from, Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers wheeled before her, sprang in through the window, struck the floor, and became a young man. The maiden was frightened; but when he spoke it became one knows not how joyous and pleasant at her heart. They talked till dawn, — I know not indeed of what; I know only that when day began to break, Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers kissed her and said: “Every night as soon as the bright little flower is placed on the window I will fly to thee, my dear. But here is a feather from my wing. Shouldst thou wish for robes, go out on the balcony and wave it on the right side; in a moment all that thy soul desires will appear before thee.” He kissed her once more, turned into a bright falcon, and flew away beyond the dark forest.

The maiden looked after her fated one, closed the window, and lay down to sleep. From that time every night, as soon as she placed the little red flower at the window, the good youth, Bright Finist the Falcon, flew to her.

Well, Sunday came. The elder sisters began to dress for Mass. “But what art thou going to wear? Thou hast nothing new,” said they to the youngest one.

She answered, “Never mind; I can pray even at home.”



The elder sisters went to church, and the youngest sat at the window in an old dress and looked at the orthodox people going to church. She bided her time, went out on the porch, waved her colored feather on the right; and from wherever they came there appeared before her a crystal carriage, blooded horses, servants in gold, robes, and every ornament of precious stones. In one moment the beautiful maiden was dressed, sat in the carriage, and dashed off to church. The people look, admire her beauty. "It is clear that some Tsar's daughter has come," said they among themselves.

As soon as "Dostoino" was sung, she went out of the church, sat in the carriage, and was whirled back home. The orthodox people went out to look at her, to see where she would go; but nothing of the sort, — her trace had grown cold long ago.

Our beauty had barely come to the court when she waved her bright feather on the left side; in a moment the maidens undressed her and the carriage vanished. She was sitting as if nothing had happened, looking out through the window to see how the orthodox people go home from church.

The sisters too came home. "Well, sister," said they, "what a beauty was at church to-day! Just a sight, neither to be told in a tale nor described with a pen. It must be that she is some Tsar's daughter from another land, so splendidly dressed, wonderfully!"



The second and third Sundays came; the beautiful maiden mystified the orthodox people, and her sisters, her father, and her mother. But the last time when she undressed she forgot to take out of her hair the diamond pin. The elder sisters came from the church and told her of the Tsar's daughter; but when they looked at the youngest sister the diamonds were blazing in her hair.

"Oh, sister, what is this?" cried they; "why just such a pin was in the hair of the Tsar's daughter to-day. Where didst thou get it?"

The beautiful maiden was confused, and ran to her chamber. There was no end of guesses and whispers, but the youngest sister said nothing and laughed in secret. The elder sisters began to watch her and to listen in the night at her chamber; and they overheard one time her conversation with Bright Finist the Falcon, and saw with their own eyes at daybreak how he sprang from the window and flew off beyond the dark forest.

The elder sisters were clearly malicious. They planned to put hidden knives for the evening on the window of their sister's room, so that Bright Finist the Falcon might cut his colored wings. They did this straightway; the youngest sister knew nothing of the matter. She put her red flower on the window, lay down on the couch, and fell asleep soundly. Bright Finist the Falcon flew to the window, and as he was springing in cut his left foot;



but the beautiful maiden knew nothing of this; she was sleeping so sweetly, so calmly. Angrily did Bright Finist the Falcon rise to the sky and fly beyond the dark forest.

In the morning the maiden woke up. She looked on every side; it was daylight already, and the good youth was not there. She looked at the window, and on the window were two sharp knives across each other, and red blood was dripping from them to the flower. Long did the maiden shed bitter tears, many sleepless nights did she pass by the window of her chamber. She waved the bright feather in vain; Bright Finist the Falcon flies no longer himself, and sends not his servants.

At last she went to her father with tears in her eyes and begged his blessing, gave orders to forge three pairs of iron shoes, three iron staves, three iron caps, and three iron Easter cakes; she put a pair of shoes on her feet, the cap on her head, took a staff in her hand, and went toward that point from which Bright Finist the Falcon had flown to her. She goes through slumbering forests, she goes over stumps, over logs. One pair of iron shoes are trodden out, one iron cap is worn off, one staff is breaking up, one cake is gnawed away, and the beautiful maiden walks on, walks all the time, and the forest grows darker, grows denser.

All at once she sees standing before her an iron hut on hen's legs, and it turns without ceasing.



“Hut, hut!” said she, “stand with thy back to the forest, thy front to me.”

The hut turned its front to her. She entered the hut, and in it was lying a Baba-Yaga from corner to corner, her lips on the crosspiece, her nose in the loft.

“Tfu-tfu-tfu! in former days nothing of Russia was seen with sight nor heard with hearing; but now the odor of Russia goes through the wide world in visible seeming, runs to one’s nose. Where dost thou hold thy way, beautiful maiden? Art flying from labor, or seekest labor?”

“Oh, grandmother dear, I had Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers; my sisters did harm him! Now I am seeking for Bright Finist the Falcon.”

“Oh, my child, thou hast far to go; thrice nine lands must yet be passed! Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers lives in the fiftieth kingdom in the eightieth land, and is now betrothed to the daughter of a Tsar.”

The Baba-Yaga nourished and fed the maiden with what God had sent, and put her to bed. Next morning, when the light was just coming, she roused her, gave her a present for the road, — a small golden hammer and ten little diamond nails, — and said: “When thou comest to the blue sea, the bride of Bright Finist the Falcon will come out on the shore to walk; take the golden hammer and drive the diamond nails. She will try to buy them of thee; but, beautiful maiden, take no pay, only ask to see Bright



Finist the Falcon. Now go, with God, to my second sister."

Again the fair maiden goes through the dark forest, goes farther and farther; the forest is darker and deeper, the tree-tops wind up to the sky. Now almost the second pair of shoes are trodden out, the second cap worn away, the second iron staff breaking, the iron cake gnawed away; before the maiden is an iron hut on hen's legs, and it turns without ceasing.

"Hut, oh, hut!" said she, "stop with thy back to the trees and thy front to me, so that I may creep in and eat."

The hut turned its back to the trees and its front to the maiden. She entered. In the hut lay a Baba-Yaga from corner to corner, her lips on the cross-piece, her nose in the loft.

"Tfu-tfu-tfu! in former days nothing of Russia was seen with sight or heard with hearing; but now the odor of Russia goes through the wide world. Whither dost hold thy way, fair maiden?"

"Grandmother, dear, I am seeking Bright Finist the Falcon."

"Oh! he is going to marry; they have the maiden's party to-night," said the Baba-Yaga.

She gave her to eat and drink, and put the maiden to sleep. At daybreak next morning she roused her, gave her a golden plate with a diamond ball, and enjoined on her most firmly, "When thou comest



to the shore of the blue sea, roll the diamond ball on the golden plate. The bride of Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers will try to buy the plate and ball; but take nothing for it, only ask to see Bright Finist the Falcon. Now go, with God, to my eldest sister."

Again the fair maiden goes through the dark forest, goes farther and farther; the forest grows darker and deeper. Now are the third pair of shoes almost trodden out, the third cap is wearing off, the third staff is breaking, and the last cake is gnawed away. On her legs stands an iron hut and turns about.

"Hut, oh, hut!" cried she, "stand with thy back to the trees and thy face to me; I must creep in and eat bread."

The hut turned. In the hut lay another Baba-Yaga from corner to corner, her lips on the cross-piece, her nose in the loft.

"Tfu-tfu-tfu! in former times nothing of Russia was seen with sight nor heard with hearing; but now the odor of Russia goes through the wide world. Where, beautiful maiden, dost thou hold thy way?"

"Grandmother, dear, I am seeking Bright Finist the Falcon."

"Oh, fair maiden, he has married a Tsar's daughter! Here is my swift steed; sit on him, and go, with God."

The maiden sat on the steed and shot away farther. The forest grew thinner and thinner.



Behold, the blue sea is before her; broad and roomy is it spread, and there in the distance, like fire, burn the golden summits above the lofty, white-walled chambers. That is the kingdom of Bright Finist the Falcon. She sat then on the movable sand of the shore, and hammered with hammer the diamond nails. All at once the Tsar's daughter goes with her nurses and maidens and trusty serving-women along the shore; she stops, and wants to buy the diamond nails and the golden hammer.

"Tsar's daughter, let me but look at Bright Finist the Falcon, I will give them for nothing," answered the maiden.

"Bright Finist the Falcon is sleeping at present, and has ordered that none be admitted; but give me thy beautiful nails and hammer, I will show him to thee."

She took the hammer and nails, ran to the palace, stuck into the clothes of Bright Finist the Falcon a magic pin, so that he should sleep more soundly and not wake; then she commanded her nurses to conduct the beautiful maiden through the palace to her husband, and went herself to walk.

Long did the maiden struggle, long did she weep over her dear one; she could not wake him in any way. When she had walked to her pleasure, the Tsar's daughter came home, drove her away, and pulled out the pin.

Bright Finist the Falcon woke. "Oh, how long I





NEXT DAY THE BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN SAT AGAIN ON  
THE SHORE OF THE BLUE SEA. *Page 57.*







have slept! Some one was here," said he, "and wept over me all the time, talking the while; but I could not open my eyes, I felt so heavy."

"Thou wast only dreaming," said the Tsar's daughter; "no one was here."

Next day the beautiful maiden sat again on the shore of the blue sea, and was rolling a diamond ball on a golden plate.

The Tsar's daughter went out to walk; she saw them, and said, "Sell them to me."

"Let me look at Bright Finist the Falcon, and I will give them for nothing."

The Tsar's daughter agreed, and again she pierced the clothes of Bright Finist the Falcon with a magic pin. Again the fair maiden wept bitterly over her dear one, but could not rouse him.

The third day she sat on the shore of the blue sea, so sad and sorrowful, she was feeding her steed with glowing coals. The Tsar's daughter, seeing that the steed was eating fire, wanted to buy him.

"Let me look on Bright Finist the Falcon, and I'll give the steed for nothing."

The Tsar's daughter agreed, ran to the palace, and said to her husband, "Let me look in thy head." She sat down to look in his head, and stuck the pin in his hair; straightway he was in a deep sleep. Then she sent her nurses for the beautiful maiden.

The fair maiden came, tried to wake her dear, embraced him and kissed him, crying bitterly, bit-



terly herself; he wakes not. Then she began to look in his head, and out fell the magic pin.

Bright Finist the Falcon woke all at once; he saw the fair maiden and was glad. She told him everything as it was, — how her malicious sisters had envied her, how she had wandered, and how she had exchanged with the Tsar's daughter. He loved her more than before, kissed her on the sweet lips, and gave command to call without delay boyars, princes, and people of every degree. Then he asked: "What is your judgment: with which wife should I spend my life, — with her who sold me, or her who bought me?"

All the boyars, princes, and people of each degree decided in one voice to take the woman who had bought him; but the one who had sold him, to hang on the gate and shoot her. Bright Finist the Falcon of Flowery Feathers did this.



THE PIG WITH GOLD BRISTLES, THE DEER WITH  
GOLDEN HORNS, AND THE GOLDEN-MANED  
STEED WITH GOLDEN TAIL.

THERE lived a Tsar, and he had a daughter, Tsarevna, Priceless Beauty, not to be told of in a tale nor described with a pen. The Tsar issued a call throughout all towns that whoever would kiss the Tsarevna through twelve windows, no matter of what stock he might be, he would get the Tsarevna for wife, and receive half the kingdom.

In this kingdom lived a merchant, and he had three sons; the two elder were crafty, and the third, the youngest, was a simpleton. Well, the elder brothers said, "Father, we will go to get the Tsarevna."

"Go, with God," said the merchant.

They took the very best horses and began to make ready for the road. The fool also was preparing.

"Where art thou going, fool? How couldst thou kiss the Tsarevna?" and they laughed at him in every manner.

They went away, and the simpleton dragged along after them on a poor mangy little horse. He went into the field, and he cried with a shrill voice: "Oh,



blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem!"

Wherever he came from, a splendid steed rushed up; the ground trembled. The simpleton crept into one ear of the steed and out of the other, and became such a beauty as had never been seen nor heard of. He sat on the horse, and rode to the Tsar's palace; and when he rushed up he broke six panes of glass.

All were astonished, and cried, "Who is that? Seize him, hold him!"

But his trace was cold. He rode away into the field, crept into one ear of his steed, out of the other, and became just such a simpleton as before; he sat on his wretched horse, rode home, and lay on the stove.

His brothers came back and said: "Well, father, there was a hero,— such a hero! He broke through six glasses at once."

The simpleton from the stove cried out: "Ah, brothers, was not that I?"

"Thou dunce! how couldst thou do it; how couldst thou get the Tsarevna? Thou art not worth her finger nail."

Next day the brothers prepared again to go to the Tsar's palace; the simpleton also prepared. "What art thou going for, thou dunce?" laughed the brothers; "thou art needed there, I suppose!"

The simpleton went again on his mangy, wretched little horse to the field, and cried in a shrill voice:



“ Oh, blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem ! ”

The steed rushed, the ground trembled, the simpleton crept into one ear of the steed and out of the other, and became such a beauty as had never been seen or heard of before. He rushed through the Tsar's court, broke all the twelve windows, and kissed the Tsarevna, Priceless Beauty. She put a mark straight on his forehead.

All were astonished, and cried: “ Stop him, hold him ! Who is he ? ”

But his trace was cold. He rode out to the field, crept into one ear and out of the other, became just such a simpleton as before, came home, tied a rag around his forehead, pretended that his head was aching, and lay down on the stove.

His brothers returned and said: “ Oh, father, there was a hero, such a hero ! At once he broke all twelve windows and kissed the Tsarevna. ”

The simpleton cried out from the stove: “ Ah, brothers, was it not I ? ”

“ Oh, thou dunce, how could it be ? ”

Meanwhile the Tsarevna was thinking who her bridegroom could be. She went to the Tsar and said: “ Father, let me bring together all the Tsars' sons, kings' sons, nobles, merchants, and peasants to a feast, to a talk, and find out who kissed me. ” The Tsar permitted her.

Well, the whole Christian world met. The Tsarevna



herself went among them all, entertained all with wine, examined to see if she could find the mark on any man's forehead. She went to each; at last she brought wine to the simpleton.

"What hast thou bound up there?" asked the Tsarevna.

"So, nothing; my head aches," said the simpleton.

"Well, then, untie it." The Tsarevna unbound his head, recognized the mark, and grew faint.

The Tsar said to her, "It is impossible to change the word now; it has to be so, — be his wife."

They married the simpleton and the Tsarevna. She was weeping bitterly; her two sisters, who had married Tsars' sons, were laughing at her, and said: "There it is; she has married a fool!"

Once the Tsar called all his sons-in-law and said: "I have heard that in such a state, in such a kingdom, there is a wonder, — a pig with gold bristles. Is it not possible in some way to get this pig? Try."

Well, the two crafty sons-in-law saddled the very best horses, sat on them, and rode away.

The fool took from the stable the very last miserable horse, and followed his brothers. He came out into an open field, and cried with a shrill voice: "Come, blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem!" Wherever he came from, the wondrous horse was snorting and tearing the ground with his hoof. The simpleton crawled into one ear and out of the other.



Wherever they came from, there stood before him two youths, and they asked, "What dost thou wish, what is thy pleasure?"

"To have a tent here, and in the tent a bed; beside the tent to have the pig with gold bristles walking."

All was done in a moment. The tent was there, in the tent a bed; on the bed lay the simpleton, but such a hero that no one could know him. The pig with gold bristles was walking by the side of the tent in the meadow.

The other brothers-in-law travelled and travelled; nowhere could they see a pig with gold bristles. On their way home they approached the tent and saw the wonder. "Oh! here is where the pig with gold bristles is walking; let us go," said they, "and whatever must be given we will give, we will buy the pig and please our father-in-law."

They went to the tent and saluted the owner. The simpleton asked: "Where are ye travelling? what are ye looking for?"

"Wilt thou sell us the pig with gold bristles? we are looking for this pig a long time."

"No, I want it myself."

"Ask what will please thee, but sell."

They offered him a thousand for the pig, and two and three and more; but the simpleton would not consent. "I will not take a hundred thousand," said he.

"Oh, let us have him, please; take what seems good to thee!"



“ Well, ye need him so greatly, I will give him, and will not take much, — the middle toe of each man’s foot.”

They thought and thought, took off their boots, and each man cut off the middle toe of his foot. The simpleton took the toes, hid them, and gave the pig with gold bristles. The brothers-in-law went home, taking the pig with them.

The Tsar was so glad that he knew not what to call them, where to seat them, or what to give them to eat.

“ Have ye seen the fool? ” asked the Tsar.

“ With seeing we have not seen him, with hearing we have not heard.”

The simpleton crept into one ear of his horse, out of the other, and became just such a fool as before. He killed his horse, took off his skin, and put it on; then he caught magpies, crows, jackdaws, and sparrows, tied them around himself, and went home. He came into the palace and let all his birds loose; they flew around on every side, and broke nearly all the windows of the palace.

The Tsarevna, Priceless Beauty, covered herself with tears, and her sisters were screaming with laughter. “ Our husbands,” said they, “ brought home the pig with gold bristles, and thy fool — look, if it please thee, how he has dressed himself as a monster ! ”

The Tsar shouted: “ What a clown ! I’ll fix him.”

Again the Tsar called his sons-in-law. “ My dear



sons-in-law, I have heard that in such a kingdom, in such a land, there is a wonder, — a deer with golden horns and a golden tail. Can ye not get him in any way?"

"We can, your Majesty."

Now the two crafty sons-in-law saddled the very best horses and set out.

"Well," said the Tsar to the simpleton, "go thou with the others."

The simpleton took from the stable the very last miserable horse and followed his brothers. He went out in the open field and cried with a shrill voice: "Oh, blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem." Wherever he came from, the wonderful horse was there, snorting and tearing the ground with his hoofs. The simpleton crept in one of his ears and out of the other. Wherever they came from, two young men stood before him and asked: "What dost thou want?"

"I want a tent here, in the tent a bed, and at the side of the tent a deer with golden horns and a golden tail."

That moment the tent was there, in the tent a bed, on the bed the simpleton stretched himself, — such a beauty that no man could know him; at the side of the tent walked a deer with golden horns and a golden tail.

The crafty brothers travelled and travelled. Nowhere did they see such a deer, and they turned



to come home. They came near the tent and saw the wonder. "Oh, this is where the deer with golden horns and a golden tail is! Let us go," said they; "whatever must be given we'll give, buy that deer, and please our father-in-law."

They came up and saluted. The simpleton asked: "Why are ye travelling; what are ye seeking?"

"Wilt thou sell us the deer with golden horns and a golden tail?"

"No, it is not for sale; I want it myself."

"Ask what will please thee, but sell." They offered one, two, three thousand, and more. The simpleton would n't listen to the offers, would not take money.

"But if my deer has pleased you, I'll sell him, if ye like, at a cheap price,—the middle finger of each man's hand."

They thought and thought, and agreed. They took off their gloves and cut off the middle finger. The simpleton put the fingers away and gave the deer.

The sons-in-law came home, and brought the deer with golden horns and a golden tail. The Tsar from joy knew not what to call them, where to seat them, or with what to entertain them.

"Have ye seen the fool anywhere?" asked the Tsar.

"With seeing we have not seen him, with hearing we have not heard."

The simpleton crept into one ear of the horse and out of the other, and became just such a simpleton as



he had been before. He killed his wretched horse, skinned him, and put on the skin; then caught a lot of jackdaws, crows, magpies, and sparrows, tied them around himself, and went home. He came again to the palace, and let out the birds in different directions; his wife was sobbing, and her sisters were laughing. "Our husbands," said they, "brought home the deer with golden horns and a golden tail, and thy fool — look at him!"

The Tsar shouted at the fool: "What an ignorant lout!" and he gave half the kingdom to his crafty sons-in-law.

The third time the Tsar called his crafty sons-in-law, and said: "My dear sons-in-law, I will give you the whole kingdom if ye will get for me the golden-maned steed with golden tail; I have heard that he is in such a kingdom and such a land."

The crafty sons-in-law saddled the very best horses and went on their journey.

The Tsar sent also the fool. "Well, go thou too."

The simpleton took the very last wretched horse from the stable and followed his crafty brothers. He came to the open field and cried with a shrill voice: "Oh, blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem!" Wherever he came from, the marvellous steed was snorting, and tearing the earth with his hoof. Behold, the simpleton crept into one ear and out of the other, and became such a beauty that it was not in the power of man to recognize him.



Then, wherever they came from, there stood before him two youths, and they asked, "What dost thou wish; what dost thou want?"

"I want a tent here, in the tent a bed, and at the side of the tent the golden-maned steed with golden tail."

That minute the tent was made, in the tent a bed. The simpleton stretched himself on the bed; at the side of the tent the golden-maned steed with golden tail was walking.

The crafty sons-in-law travelled and travelled; nowhere did they see that kind of steed, and were on their way home. They drew near the tent, and saw the wonder.

"Oh, here is the place where the golden-maned steed with golden tail is walking. Let us go in," said they; "we will give whatever they ask, and buy him to please our father-in-law."

The simpleton asked: "Whither are ye travelling; what are ye seeking?"

"Sell us the golden-maned steed with golden tail."

"He is not for sale; I want him myself."

"Ask what may please thee, only sell him;" and they offered one, two, three thousand and more.

"I would not take a hundred thousand," said the simpleton.

"Sell him to us; take what will please thee."

"Well, if ye need him greatly, I will give him to you; I will not take a high price. Let me cut a strap from the back of each one of you."



They thought and thought, struggled and struggled, wanted the horse very badly, were sorry for themselves, but decided at last, undressed, and took off their shirts. The simpleton cut from the back of each one of them a strap, took the straps, put them away, and delivered the steed.

The sons-in-law came home bringing the golden-maned steed with golden tail. The Tsar from delight knew not what to call them, where to seat them, or how to entertain them, and gave them the remaining half of the kingdom. The simpleton crept into one ear of the steed and out of the other, and became what he had been before. He killed his wretched horse, took off the skin, put it on himself, caught magpies, crows, jackdaws, and sparrows, tied them around himself, came to the palace, and let out the birds; they flew in different directions, and broke nearly all the windows. The Tsarevna, his wife, was crying, and her sisters were laughing at her. "Our husbands have brought the golden-maned steed with golden tail; but look at thy fool going around such a fright!"

The Tsar shouted at the fool: "What an ignorant lout! I'll have thee shot."

And the simpleton asked: "With what wilt thou reward me?"

"What reward shouldst thou have?" asked the Tsar.

"If the truth must be told, I got for thee the pig



with gold bristles, the deer with golden horns and a golden tail, and the golden-maned steed with golden tail."

"How canst thou prove that?" asked the Tsar.

"Command thy sons-in-law, Gosudár, to take off their boots."

The sons-in-law began to make excuses; they didn't want to take off their boots.

"Take off your boots," urged the Tsar; "there is no harm in that."

They took off their boots. The Tsar looks: one toe is missing.

"Here are their toes," said the simpleton. "Order them now to take off their gloves."

They removed their gloves, and the Tsar saw there was a finger missing.

"Here are their fingers," said the simpleton. "Order them now to take off their shirts."

The Tsar saw that the affair was coming true, and ordered them to undress. They took off their shirts, and the Tsar saw that each one of them had a strap cut from his back the width of two fingers.

"Here are the straps," said the simpleton; and told the whole story as it was.

The Tsar did n't know how to entertain him, nor how to reward him. He gave him the whole kingdom, and the other sons-in-law, because they had deceived him, he had shot.

The simpleton went to the open field and cried



with a shrill voice: "Oh, blue-brown, cunning bay, stand before me as leaf before stem!" The horse ran, the ground trembled, the simpleton crept into one ear of the steed and out of the other, and became a hero and a beauty.

He came home, began to live with his Tsarevna and win wealth.



WATER OF YOUTH, WATER OF LIFE, AND  
WATER OF DEATH.

IN a certain kingdom in a certain land there lived a Tsar; that Tsar had three sons, — two crafty, and the third simple. Somehow the Tsar had a dream that beyond the thrice ninth land, in the thirtieth kingdom, there was a beautiful maiden, from whose hands and feet water was flowing, that whoever would drink that water would become thirty years younger. The Tsar was very old. He summoned his sons and counsellors, and asked: “Can any one explain my dream?”

The counsellors answered the Tsar: “We have not seen with sight nor heard with hearing of such a beautiful maiden, and how to go to her is unknown to us.”

Now the eldest son, Dmitri Tsarevich, spoke up: “Father, give me thy blessing to go in all four directions, look at people, show myself, and make search for the beautiful maiden.”

The Tsar gave his parental blessing. “Take,” said he, “treasure as much as thou wishest, and all kinds of troops as many as are necessary.”

Dmitri Tsarevich took one hundred thousand men and set out on the road, on the journey. He



rode a day, he rode a week, he rode a month, and two and three months. No matter whom he asked, no one knew of the beautiful maiden, and he came to such desert places that there were only heaven and earth. He urged his horse on, and behold before him is a lofty mountain; he could not see the top with his eyes. Somehow he climbed the mountain and found there an ancient, a gray old man.

“Hail, grandfather!”

“Hail, brave youth! Art fleeing from labor, or seekest thou labor?”

“I am seeking labor.”

“What dost thou need?”

“I have heard that beyond the thrice ninth land, in the thirtieth kingdom, is a beautiful maiden, from whose hands and feet healing water flows, and that whoever gets and drinks this water will grow thirty years younger.”

“Well, brother, thou canst not go ‘nere.”

“Why not?”

“Because there are three broad rivers on the road, and on these rivers three ferries: at the first ferry they will cut off thy right hand, at the second thy left foot, at the third they will take thy head.”

Dmitri Tsarevich was grieved; he hung his stormy head below his shoulders, and thought: “Must I spare my father’s head? Must I spare my own? I’ll turn back.”

He came down from the mountain, went back to



his father, and said: "No, father, I have not been able to find her; there is nothing to be heard of that maiden."

The second son, Vassili Tsarevich, began to beg: "Father, give me thy blessing; perhaps I can find her."

"Go, my son."

Vassili Tsarevich took one hundred thousand men, and set out on his road, on his journey. He rode a day, he rode a week, he rode a month, and two, and three, and entered such places that there was nothing but forests and swamps. He found there Baba-Yaga, boneleg. "Hail, Baba-Yaga, boneleg!"

"Hail, brave youth! Art thou fleeing from labor, or seekest labor?"

"I am seeking labor. I have heard that beyond the thrice ninth land, in the thirtieth kingdom, is a beautiful maiden, from whose feet and hands healing water flows."

"There is, father; only thou canst not go there."

"Why not?"

"Because on the road there are three ferries: at the first ferry they will cut off thy right hand, at the second thy left foot, at the third off with thy head."

"It is not a question of saving my father's head, but sparing my own."

He returned, and said to his father: "No, father, I could not find her; there is nothing to be heard of that maiden."



The youngest son, Ivan Tsarevich, began to beg: "Give me thy blessing, father; maybe I shall find her."

The father gave him his blessing. "Go, my dear son; take troops and treasure all that are needed."

"I need nothing, only give me a good steed and the sword Kládyenets."

Ivan Tsarevich mounted his steed, took the sword Kládyenets, and set out on his way, on his journey. He rode a day, he rode a week, he rode a month, and two and three; and rode into such places that his horse was to the knees in water, to the breast in grass, and he, good youth, had nothing to eat. He saw a cabin on hen's feet, and entered: inside sat Baba-Yaga, boneleg.

"Hail, grandmother!"

"Hail, Ivan Tsarevich! Art flying from labor, or seekest labor?"

"What labor? I am going to the thirtieth kingdom; there, it is said, lives a beautiful maiden, from whose hands and feet healing water flows."

"There is, father; though with sight I have not seen her, with hearing I have heard of her: but to her it is not for thee to go."

"Why so?"

"Because there are three ferries on the way: at the first ferry they will cut off thy right hand, at the second thy left foot, at the third off with thy head."

"Well, grandmother, one head is not much; I will go, whatever God gives."



“Ah! Ivan Tsarevich, better turn back; thou art still a green youth, hast never been in places of danger, hast not seen great terror.”

“No,” said Ivan; “if thou seizest the rope, don’t say thou art not strong.” He took farewell of Baba-Yaga and went farther.

He rode a day, a second, and a third, and came to the first ferry: the ferrymen were sleeping on the opposite bank. “What is to be done?” thought Ivan. “If I shout, they ’ll be deaf for the rest of their lives; if I whistle, I shall sink the ferry-boat.” He whistled a half whistle. The ferrymen sprang up that minute and ferried him across the river.

“What is the price of your work, brothers?”

“Give us thy right hand.”

“Oh, I want that for myself!” Then Ivan Tsarevich struck with his sword on the right, and on the left. He cut down all the ferrymen, mounted his horse, and galloped ahead. At the two other ferries he got away in the same fashion. He was drawing near the thirtieth kingdom. On the boundary stood a wild man, in stature tall as a forest, in thickness the equal of a great stack of hay; he held in his hands an enormous oak-tree.

“Oh, worm!” said the giant to Ivan Tsarevich, “whither art thou riding?”

“I am going to the thirtieth kingdom; I want to see the beautiful maiden from whose hands and feet healing water flows.”

“How couldst thou, little pigmy, go there? I am



a hundred years guarding her kingdom, great, mighty heroes came here, — not the like of thee, — and they fell from my strong hand. What art thou? Just a little worm!”

Ivan Tsarevich saw that he could not manage the giant, and he turned aside. He travelled and travelled till he came to a sleeping forest; in the forest was a cabin, and in the cabin an old, ancient woman was sitting. She saw the good youth, and said: “Hail, Ivan Tsarevich! Why has God brought thee hither?”

He told her all without concealment. The old woman gave him magic herbs and a ball.

“Go out,” said she, “into the open field, make a fire, and throw these herbs on it; but take care to stand on the windward. From these magic herbs the giant will sleep a deep sleep; cut his head off, then let the ball roll, and follow. The ball will take thee to those regions where the beautiful maiden reigns. She lives in a great golden castle, and often rides out with her army to the green meadows to amuse herself. Nine days does she stay there; then sleeps a hero’s sleep nine days and nine nights.”

Ivan Tsarevich thanked the old woman and went to the open field, where he made a fire and threw into it the magic herbs. The stormy wind bore the smoke to where the wild man was standing on guard. It grew dim in his eyes; he lay on the damp earth and fell soundly asleep. Ivan Tsarevich cut off his head, let the ball roll, and rode on. He travelled and



travelled till the golden palace was visible; then he turned from the road, let his horse out to feed, and crept into a thicket himself. He had just hidden, when dust was rising in a column from the front of the palace: the beautiful maiden rode out with her army to amuse herself in the green meadows. The Tsarevich saw that the whole army was formed of maidens alone. One was beautiful, the next surpassed that one; fairer than all, and beyond admiration was the Tsarevna herself.

Nine days was she sporting in the green meadows, and the Tsarevich did not take his eyes from her, still he could not gaze his fill. On the tenth day he went to the golden palace. The beautiful maiden was lying on a couch of down, sleeping a hero's sleep; from her hands and feet healing water was flowing. At the same time her trusty army was sleeping as well.

Ivan Tsarevich took a flask of the healing water. His heroic heart could not withstand her maiden beauty. He tarried awhile, then left the palace, mounted his good steed, and rushed toward home.

Nine days slept the beautiful maiden, and when she woke her rage was dreadful. She stamped, she screamed with a piercing voice: "What wretch has been here?" she sprang on to her fleet-flying mare, and struck into a chase after Ivan Tsarevich. The mare races, the ground trembles; she caught up with the good hero, struck him with her sword, and



straight in the breast did she strike. The Tsarevich fell on the damp earth: his bright eyes close, his red blood stiffens. The fair maiden looked at him, and great pity seized her; through the whole world might she search, and not find such a beauty. She placed her white hand on his wound, moistened it with healing water. All at once the wound closed, and Ivan Tsarevich rose up unharmed.

“Wilt thou take me as wife?” asked she.

“I will, beautiful maiden.”

“Well, go home, and wait three years.”

Ivan Tsarevich took farewell of his betrothed bride and continued his journey. He was drawing near his own kingdom; but his elder brothers had put guards everywhere, so as not to let him come near his father. The guards gave notice at once that Ivan Tsarevich was coming. The elder brothers met him on the road, drugged him, took the flask of healing water, and threw him into a deep pit. Ivan Tsarevich came out in the underground kingdom.

He travelled and travelled in the underground kingdom. When he came to a certain place, a great storm rose up, lightning flashed, thunder roared, rain fell. He went to a tree to find shelter; looked up, and saw young birds in that tree all wet. He took off his coat, covered them, and sat himself under the tree.

When the old bird flew to the tree, she was so large that she hid the light, and it grew dark as if



night were near. When she saw her young covered, she asked: "Who has protected my little birds?" Then, seeing the Tsarevich, she said: "It is thou who didst this; God save thee! Whatever thou wishest, ask of me; I will do everything for thee."

He said, "Bear me out into the upper world."

"Make ready," said the bird, "a double box. Fill one half of it with every kind of game, and in the other half put water, so as to have something with which to nourish me."

The Tsarevich did all that was asked. The bird took the box on her back, and the Tsarevich sat in the middle. She flew up; and whether it was long or short, she bore him to this upper world, took farewell of him, and flew home.

Ivan Tsarevich went to his father; but the old Tsar did not like him by reason of the lies which his brothers had told, and sent him into exile. For three whole years Ivan wandered from place to place. When three years had passed, the beautiful maiden sailed in a ship to the capital town of Ivan Tsarevich's father. She sent a letter to the Tsar, demanding the man who had stolen the water, and if he refused she would burn and destroy his kingdom utterly.

The Tsar sent his eldest son; he went to the ship. Two little boys, grandsons of the Tsar, saw him, and asked their mother: "Is that our father?"

"No, that is your uncle."



“How shall we meet him?”

“Take each one a whip and flog him back home.”

The eldest Tsarevich returned, looking as if he had eaten something unsalted.

The maiden continued her threats, demanded the guilty man. The Tsar sent his second son, and the same thing happened to him as to the eldest. Now the Tsar gave command to find the youngest Tsarevich.

When the Tsarevich was found, his father wished him to go on the ship to the maiden. But he said: “I will go when a crystal bridge is built to the ship, and on the bridge there shall be many kinds of food and wine set out.”

There was no help for it; they built the bridge, prepared the food, brought wines and meat.

The Tsarevich collected his comrades. “Come with me, attend me,” said he; “eat ye and drink, spare nothing.”

While he was walking on the bridge the little boys cried out: “Mother, who is that?”

“That is your father.”

“How shall we meet him?”

“Take him by the hands and lead him to me.”

They did so; there was kissing and embracing. After that they went to the Tsar, told him all just as it had been. The Tsar drove his eldest sons from the castle, and lived with Ivan, — lived on and gained wealth.



THE  
FOOTLESS AND BLIND CHAMPIONS.

IN a certain kingdom, in a certain land, there lived a Tsar with his Tsaritsa. They had a son, Ivan Tsarevich, and Katoma of the Oaken Cap was appointed tutor to care for and guard Ivan.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa attained to ancient years, fell ill, and had no thought to recover. They summoned Ivan Tsarevich and said: "When we die, do thou obey in all things Katoma of the Oaken Cap and honor him. If thou obeyest him, thou'lt be happy; but if disobedient, thou wilt perish like a fly."

Next day the Tsar and Tsaritsa died. Ivan buried his parents and lived according to their command: whatever he did, he always held counsel with his tutor. Whether it was long or short, the Tsarevich grew to years of manhood and thought of marrying. He came to Katoma of the Oaken Cap and said: "I feel dreary alone; I wish to marry."

"Well, Tsarevich, where is the halt? Thy years are such that it is time to think of a bride. Go to the great chamber, — there the portraits of all Tsars' daughters and all kings' daughters are collected. Look at them and choose; if any please thee, propose for that one."



Ivan Tsarevich went to the great chamber, examined the portraits; and Princess Anna the Beautiful suited his mind, — such a beauty that in the whole world there was not her equal. Under her portrait was written that if any man gave her a riddle and she could not solve it, she would marry the man; and whose riddle she solved, off went his head. Ivan Tsarevich read this inscription, grew very sorrowful, and went to his uncle. “I have been,” said he, “in the great chamber, and have found for myself a bride, — Anna the Beautiful; but I know not how to get her.”

“Yes, Tsarevich, it is difficult to win her. If thou go alone, thou wilt never succeed; but if thou take me and will do what I say, perhaps the affair may be settled.”

Ivan Tsarevich begged Katoma of the Oaken Cap to go with him, and gave his faithful word to obey him in sorrow and in joy.

They prepared for the road and the journey, and went to ask Princess Anna the Beautiful in marriage. They travelled one year, travelled a second, then a third, and passed over many lands. Ivan Tsarevich said: “Uncle, we are travelling now so long a time, are nearing the land of Anna the Beautiful, and we know not what riddle to give her.”

“Oh, we will think of one yet.”

They went farther. Uncle Katoma looked on the road, and there was lying a purse with gold. He took it up, poured all the money out of it into his



own purse, and said: "Here is the riddle, Ivan Tsarevich. When thou comest to the princess, give her the riddle in these words: 'We were travelling along, and we saw good lying on the road. We took good with good and put it in our good.' She'll not solve that riddle all her life; and every other one she would know in a moment,—she would just look into her magic book, and as soon as she knew the riddle she would have thy head cut off."

Well, Ivan Tsarevich with his uncle came at last to the lofty palace where the beautiful princess was living. At that very time she was on the balcony, saw the travellers, and sent out to know whence they were, and what they had come for.

Ivan Tsarevich replied: "I have come from such and such a kingdom, and I wish to ask Anna the Beautiful in marriage."

They reported this to the princess. She gave answer that the Tsarevich should come to the palace and give, in the presence of all her counselling princes and boyars, a riddle. "With me," said she, "this order is established, that if I solve not the riddle of a man, I will marry him; but if I solve any man's riddle, I give him to a cruel death."

"Hear my riddle, beautiful princess," said Ivan. "We were going along, we saw good lying on the road, we took good with good and put it in our good."

Anna the Beautiful took her magic book, began to examine it and look for riddles; she went through



the whole volume and found nothing. Then the counselling princes and boyars decided that the princess must marry Ivan Tsarevich. Though sorry, she had to give way, and began to prepare for the wedding; but plotting to win time and get rid of the bridegroom, she thought, "I will trouble him with difficult tasks." She called Ivan Tsarevich and said: "Oh, my dear Ivan Tsarevich, my betrothed husband, we must prepare for the wedding; do me a small service. In my kingdom in such a place stands a great iron pillar; bring it to the palace kitchen and cut it into small pieces as fuel for the cook."

"My princess, is it possible that I have come here to cut fuel? Is that my business? I have a servant for that,—Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap."

The Tsarevich called Uncle Katoma straightway, and commanded him to bring the iron pillar to the kitchen and cut it into small pieces as fuel for the cook.

Uncle Katoma went to the place mentioned, took the pillar in his arms, brought it to the palace kitchen, and cut it into small pieces. Four pieces of iron did he put in his pocket, saying, "They will be good in the future."

Next day the princess said to Ivan: "My dear Tsarevich, my betrothed husband, to-morrow we must go to the crown: I will go in a carriage, and thou on an heroic steed. Meanwhile thou shouldst try the steed."



“Shall I try a horse when I have a servant for that?” Ivan Tsarevich called Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap.

“Go,” said he, “and order the stable-boys to lead forth the heroic steed; sit on him and ride him around. To-morrow I will go to the marriage on him.”

Uncle Katoma saw through the cunning of the princess, without talking long. He went to the stable and ordered them to lead forth the heroic steed. Twelve men went: they opened twelve locks, opened twelve doors, and led out the magic horse by twelve iron chains.

Uncle Katoma went to the horse: the moment he sat on him the magic steed left the earth and rose higher than the standing forest, lower than the moving clouds. Katoma sat firmly; with one hand he held the mane, with the other he took from his pocket one of the iron bars and began to pound the horse between the ears with it. He broke one bar, took another, broke that, took a third, broke that. The fourth entered service; and Katoma so hammered the steed that he could not endure, but spoke with the voice of a man: “Father Katoma, let me even live in the white world; whatever thou wishest, command, — everything shall be as thou sayest.”

“Listen, dog’s meat!” answered Uncle Katoma. “To-morrow Ivan Tsarevich will ride thee to the marriage: see to it when they lead thee to the broad



court, when the Tsarevich approaches and puts his hand on thee, that thou standest quietly, movest not an ear; and when he sits on thy back, sink to thy fetlocks, and walk under him with a heavy tread, as if an immeasurable burden were on thee."

The heroic steed heard the command and came down barely alive to the earth. Katoma took him by the tail and threw him to the side of the stable, saying, "Oh, coachmen and grooms, take this dog's meat to the stable!"

The next day rose, the hour of marriage came. They gave a carriage to the princess, and led out the heroic steed for Ivan Tsarevich. The people ran from every side in thousands. The bridegroom and the bride came forth from the white-walled palace. The princess sat in the carriage and waited for what would happen to Ivan Tsarevich. The magic steed, she thought, would scatter his hair to the wind and drag his bones over the field.

Ivan Tsarevich approached the steed, put his hand on his back, his foot in the stirrup; the horse stood as if fixed to the earth, moved not an ear. Ivan sat on his back; the horse sank in the ground to the fetlocks. They removed the twelve chains from him; the horse began to walk with a slow and heavy tread, the sweat rolled from him like rain.

"Oh, what a champion, what immeasurable strength!" said the people, looking at the Tsarevich.

They crowned the bridegroom with the bride.



They were coming out of the church, took each other by the hand, and the princess thought of testing once more the strength of Ivan Tsarevich. She pressed his hand with such force that he could not endure; the blood rushed to his face, his eyes went up under his forehead.

“So this is the kind of hero thou art!” thought the princess. “Thy uncle has deceived me grandly; but this will not go with thee for nothing.”

Anna the Beautiful lived with Ivan Tsarevich as was befitting a wife with a God-given husband, and she in every way flattered him with words, but thought only of one thing,—how to destroy Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap. It was not difficult for her to manage the Tsarevich without the uncle. No matter how much calumny she invented, Ivan did not yield to her speeches; he had pity on his uncle. In a year’s time he said to his wife: “My dear consort, beautiful princess, I should like to go with thee to my own kingdom.”

“Very well, let us go; I have long wished to see thy kingdom.”

They got ready and went, making Uncle Katoma coachman. They travelled and travelled. Ivan Tsarevich fell asleep on the way. All at once Anna the Beautiful began to rouse him and complain: “Now, Tsarevich, thou art sleeping all the time, hearest nothing. But thy uncle will not obey me; he drives the horses on purpose over hillocks and



into holes, just as if trying to kill me. I spoke to him kindly, and he laughed at me. I will not live unless thou punish him."

Ivan in his drowsiness grew very angry at his uncle, and gave him over entirely to the princess. "Do with him as thou desirest." The princess gave orders to cut off his feet. Katoma allowed himself to be maltreated by her. "Let me endure," thought he; "and the Tsarevich will know what it is to suffer sorrow." They cut off Katoma's feet. The princess looked around and saw a high stump on one side; she called the servants and ordered them to seat him on that stump. Ivan Tsarevich she tied by a rope to the carriage, turned back, and went to her own kingdom. Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap was sitting on the stump, shedding bitter tears. "Farewell, Ivan Tsarevich," said he, "thou wilt remember me;" and Ivan Tsarevich ran jumping behind the carriage. He knew himself that he had made a mistake, but he could not turn back.

Anna the Beautiful came to her own kingdom, and she made Ivan Tsarevich herd cows. Every morning he went with the herd into the open field, and in the evening he drove them back into the princess' yard; and at that time she sat on the balcony and counted the cows, were they all there? She counted them, and ordered the Tsarevich to kiss the last cow on the tail; and the cow was so well trained that when she came to the gate she stopped and raised her tail.



Uncle Katoma was sitting on the stump one day, a second, a third, without food or drink. He could in no way slip down, and it was coming to him to die of hunger. Not far away was a thick wood, and in that wood lived a blind, mighty hero; and he nourished himself only with this, that when he knew by the smell that a beast was running past, — a hare, fox, or bear, — that moment he ran, caught it, and his dinner was ready. The hero was very swift of foot, and no running beast could escape him. Behold, it happened thus: a fox was slipping by; the hero heard it and pursued; the fox ran to the tall stump and turned aside. The blind champion hurried, and in the run struck his forehead against the stump so that he drove it out of the ground with its roots.

Katoma was thrown to the earth, and asked, "Who art thou?"

"The blind hero; I live in this forest thirty years, and I nourish myself only in this way. If I seize a beast, I roast it on the fire; otherwise I should have died of hunger long since."

"Is it possible that thou art blind from birth?"

"No, not from birth; Anna the Beautiful put out my eyes."

"Well, brother," said Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap, "and I through her am footless; she cut off my two feet, the cursed woman."

The two heroes talked to each other, and agreed to



live together and find food in common. The blind said to the footless: "Sit on me and show the way; I will serve thee with my feet, and thou shalt serve me with thy eyes."

He took the footless and carried him. Katoma sat, looked on both sides, and cried out: "To the right; to the left; straight ahead." They lived in this way some time in the forest and caught food, — hares, foxes, and bears.

Once the footless asked: "Is it possible that we shall live all our lives without company? I have heard that in a certain town there is a rich merchant with his daughter, and the daughter is very charitable to poor people and cripples, and gives alms herself to all. Let us carry her off, brother; let her live with us as a housekeeper."

The blind man took a wagon, put the footless in it, and drew him to the town. They went straight to the house of the rich merchant. The merchant's daughter saw them through the window. Straightway she sprang up and went to give them something. She went to the footless: "Take this, poor man, for Christ's sake." While taking the gift he seized her by the hand and into the wagon with her. He called to the blind man, who ran so swiftly that no horseman could come up with him.

The merchant sent a party in pursuit, but no one could overtake the two men. The heroes brought the merchant's daughter to their hut in the forest, and



said to her: "Be to us in the place of our own sister; live with us, keep the house, for we have no one to cook a meal for us or to wash our shirts. God will not forget thee for doing this."

The maiden remained with them. The heroes respected and loved her, and considered her as their own sister. The way was, they used to go hunting, and she was always at home, took care of the house-keeping, cooked for them, washed for them. Now a Baba-Yaga, boneleg, began to come to the hut and suck the blood of the merchant's daughter. The moment the heroes went to hunt, Baba-Yaga was there. Whether it was long or short, the fair maiden's face fell away; she grew thin and poor.

The blind man saw nothing, but Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap noticed that something was wrong. He spoke of it to the blind man, and they questioned their adopted sister. They began to urge her to answer. The Baba-Yaga had strictly forbidden her to confess. For a long time she was afraid to tell of her trouble; long she resisted. At last they persuaded her, and she confessed everything. "Whenever ye go away to hunt, an ancient old woman comes, evil-faced, long-haired, gray; she makes me search in her head, and then sucks my blood."

"Ah!" said the blind man, "that is Baba-Yaga. Wait, we must settle with her in our own fashion; to-morrow we will not go to hunt, we will try to come upon her and catch her."



Next morning they did not go to hunt.

“Well, footless uncle,” said the blind man, “crawl thou under the bench; sit quietly. I will go outside and stay under the window. And thou, sister, when Baba-Yaga comes, sit right here in this window, search in her head, separate her hair gradually, and let it out of the window. I will catch her by the gray locks.”

It was said and done. The blind man caught the Baba-Yaga by the gray locks and cried, “Ei! Uncle Katoma, crawl from under the bench and hold the viperous old hag till I go into the house.”

Baba-Yaga heard trouble, wanted to jump up, and raised her head. What could she do? She had no chance; she tore and tore, — no use.

Then Katoma crawled from under the bench, threw himself on her like a stone mountain, and began to smother Baba-Yaga. She was frightened out of her wits.

The blind man sprang into the house, and said to the footless: “We must make a big fire now, burn the old outcast, and scatter her ashes to the wind.”

Baba-Yaga implored. “Father, dove, forgive me; whatever thou wishest I’ll do.”

“Well, old witch,” said the heroes, “show us the well of living and healing water.”

“Only don’t beat me, and I’ll show you this moment.”

Uncle Katoma sat on the blind man, the blind man took Baba-Yaga by the hair, and she led them



to the forest depth, brought them to a well, and said: "Here is the healing and living water."

"See to it, Uncle Katoma," said the blind man, "make no mistake; if she deceives us now, we cannot mend matters while we live."

Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap broke from a tree a green branch and threw it into the well; the branch had not reached the water when it burst into a blaze.

"Ah, thou hast turned to deceit!"

They began to choke the old woman, and wanted to throw her into the fiery well. She implored more than before, and gave an awful oath that now she would play no tricks. "'Pon my true word, I will lead you now to good water."

They agreed to try once more, and the old woman brought them to another well.

Uncle Katoma broke a dry branch from a tree, and threw it into the well; the branch had not reached the water when it gave out buds, grew green, and blossomed.

"Oh, this is good water!" said Uncle Katoma.

The blind man moistened his eyes with it, and in a moment he saw. He let the footless down into the water, and his feet grew out.

Both were rejoiced, and said: "Now we will restore everything; but first we must settle with Baba-Yaga. If we forgive her now, we shall not see good ourselves; she will plot evil against us all our lives."

They returned to the fiery well and threw Baba-



Yaga into it, so that she perished. Then Uncle Katoma married the merchant's daughter, and all three went to the kingdom of Anna the Beautiful to liberate Ivan Tsarevich.

They were approaching the capital town. They looked, Ivan Tsarevich was driving a herd of cows.

"Stop, herdsman!" said Uncle Katoma. "Whither art thou driving these cows?"

"I am driving them to the royal castle. The princess always counts them herself, to see if all the cows are there."

"Well, herdsman, here are my clothes; put them on. I'll put on thine, and drive the cows."

"No, brother, that is impossible; if the princess should know it, woe to me."

"Never fear, nothing will come of it; Uncle Katoma is security for thee in that."

Ivan Tsarevich sighed, and said: "Oh, kind man, if Uncle Katoma were living I should not be herding cows in this field."

Then Uncle Katoma confessed to him who he was. Ivan Tsarevich embraced him firmly and shed tears. "I did not think to see thee."

They changed clothes. Uncle Katoma drove the cows to the princess's yard. Anna the Beautiful came out on the balcony, counted to see if all the cows were there, and gave command to drive them into the shed. All went in but the last one; she stopped at the gate. Katoma jumped up. "What art thou



waiting for, dog's meat?" caught her by the tail, and pulled her skin off.

The princess saw this and cried: "What is that scoundrel of a herdsman doing? Seize him; bring him to me!"

Here the servants caught Katoma and dragged him to the palace. He made no excuse, for he was confident in himself. They brought him to the palace. She looked at him and asked: "Who art thou? Whence art thou here?"

"I am the man whose feet thou didst cut off, and thou didst seat me on a stump; they call me Uncle Katoma of the Oaken Cap."

"Well," thought the princess, "if he has brought back his feet, there is no use in playing tricks with him;" and she begged forgiveness of him, was sorry for her sins, and took an oath to love Ivan Tsarevich forever and obey him in all things.

Ivan Tsarevich forgave her, and began to live with her in peace and harmony. The blind hero lived with them, and Uncle Katoma went with his wife to the rich merchant and lived in his house.



## THE THREE KINGDOMS.

IN that ancient time when God's world was full of wood-demons, witches, and river-maidens, when rivers of milk were flowing between banks of jelly, when over the fields roast partridges were flying, there lived a Tsar, Goroh by name, with his Tsaritsa, Anastasia the Beautiful; and they had three sons. A misfortune not small happened, — an unclean spirit carried away the Tsaritsa.

Said the eldest son to the Tsar: "Father, give me thy blessing; I will go in search of my mother."

He went away and vanished; for three years there were neither tidings nor report of him.

The second son began to ask: "Father, give me thy blessing for the road, for the journey. Perhaps I may have the luck to find my brother and my mother."

The Tsar gave his blessing. The Tsarevich rode off and also disappeared as if he had sunk in water.

Ivan, the youngest son, came to the Tsar. "My dear father, give me thy blessing for the road, for the journey; perhaps I shall find my brothers and mother."

"Go thy way, my dear son."



Ivan Tsarevich set out for a strange, distant region. He travelled and travelled, and reached the blue sea. He stopped on the shore and thought: "Whither can I hold my way now?" All at once there flew to sea three and thirty spoonbills, struck the earth, and became fair maidens, — all beautiful, but one was better than all the rest. They undressed and rushed into the water. Whether they were bathing a long or short time, Ivan Tsarevich stole up and took the girdle of that maiden who was better than all the rest and hid it in his bosom. When they had finished bathing they came out on shore and began to dress. One girdle was gone.

"Ah! Ivan Tsarevich," said the beauty, "give me my girdle."

"Tell me first where my mother is."

"Thy mother is at the house of my father, Raven son of Raven (Voron Voronovich). Go up along the sea, thou wilt meet a silver bird with a golden crest; wherever it flies do thou follow."

Ivan Tsarevich gave her the girdle and went along the sea; there he met his brothers, exchanged greetings, and took them with him. They went together along the shore, saw the golden-tufted silver bird, and ran after it. The bird flew and flew till it rushed under an iron plate into an opening.

"Well, brothers," said Ivan Tsarevich, "give me your blessing in the place of father and mother. I will let myself down into this opening and discover



what a land of strange faith is like, — perhaps our mother is there.”

His brothers gave him their blessing. He sat on a rope swing, crawled into that deep opening, and went down no short distance. Just three years was he letting himself down, and then went on his road and way. He went and went, went and went. He saw the Copper Kingdom. In the castle were sitting three and thirty spoonbill maidens. They were embroidering towels with cunning designs, with towns and suburbs.

“Hail, Ivan Tsarevich!” said the Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom. “Whither dost thou hold thy way?”

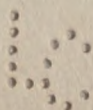
“I am going in search of my mother.”

“Thy mother is with my father, Raven son of Raven. He is cunning and wise; over mountains and valleys, over caves and clouds, has he flown. He will slay thee, good youth. Here is a ball for thee. Go to my second sister; hear what she will tell thee. If thou comest back, forget me not.”

Ivan rolled the ball and followed; he came to the Silver Kingdom. The Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom said: “Till now the Russian odor was not to be seen with sight nor heard with hearing; but now the Russian odor appears visibly. Well, Ivan Tsarevich, art fleeing from work, or seekest work?”

“Ah, fair maiden! I am in search of my mother.”

“Thy mother is with my father, Raven son of





Raven. Cunning is he and wise; over mountains, over valleys has he flown, over caves, over clouds has he swept. Oh, Tsarevich, he will slay thee! Here is a ball. Go to my youngest sister; hear what she will say to thee, whether to go on or come back."

Ivan Tsarevich came to the Golden Kingdom; there three and thirty spoonbill maidens were sitting embroidering towels. Taller than all, fairer than all, was the Tsaritsa of the Golden kingdom, — a beauty that could not be told of in a tale or described with a pen.

"Hail, Ivan Tsarevich!" said she. "Whither dost thou hold thy way?"

"I am going to seek my mother."

"Thy mother is with my father, Raven son of Raven. Cunning is he and wise. Oh, Tsarevich, he will slay thee surely! Here is a ball for thee. Go now to the Pearl Kingdom; there thy mother lives. When she sees thee she will be rejoiced, and that moment will say, 'Nurses and maidens, bring my son green wine;' but take it not. Ask her to give thee wine three years old that is in the cupboard, and a burnt crust for lunch, and do not forget that my father has in the yard two jars of water, — one water of strength, the other of weakness; put each in the place of the other, and drink of the water of strength."

The Tsarevich talked a long time with the Tsaritsa, and they fell in love with each other to such a degree



that they hated to part; but there was no help for them. Ivan Tsarevich took farewell of her and went on his journey. He travelled and travelled till he came to the Pearl Kingdom. His mother saw him, was delighted, and cried out, "Nurses and maidens, bring my son green wine."

"I drink no common wine; give me wine three years old, and for a bite a burnt crust." He drank wine three years old, ate the burnt crust, went out in the broad court, put each jar in the place of the other, and fell to drinking the water of strength.

All at once Raven son of Raven flew home, bright as the clear day; but when he saw Ivan Tsarevich he grew gloomier than the dark night. He stooped down to the jar, and began to drink the water of weakness. Then Ivan Tsarevich fell upon his wings, and Raven son of Raven soared high, high; he bore Ivan over mountains, over valleys, over caves, over clouds. "What dost thou need, Ivan Tsarevich? If thou wishest, I will give thee treasure."

"I want nothing but the feather staff."

"No, Ivan Tsarevich, thou wishest to sit in a very wide sleigh." And again Raven son of Raven bore him over mountains, over valleys, over caves, over clouds.

Ivan held firmly, bore down with all his weight, and nearly broke the wings of Raven son of Raven, who screamed, "Break not my wings; take the feather staff!" He gave Ivan the feather staff,



became a common raven himself, and flew away to the steep mountains.

Ivan Tsarevich went back, came to the Pearl Kingdom, took his mother, and set out for home. He looked; the Pearl Kingdom had turned into a ball, and was rolling after him. He came to the Golden Kingdom, then to the Silver, and then to the Copper Kingdom. He took and brought with him the three beautiful Tsaritsas, and those kingdoms were wound into balls and rolled after him. He came to the rope swing and sounded a golden trumpet: "My own brothers, if ye are alive, do not betray me."

The brothers heard the call, and drew out into the white world the beautiful soul maiden, the Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom. They saw her, and began to fight among themselves; one would not yield to the other.

"Why fight, good youths?" said the maiden. "Down there are better than I."

They let down the rope swing and drew up the Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom. Again they began to dispute and fight; one said, "Let her be mine, and come to me;" the other said, "I won't let her be thine."

"Do not fight, good youths; down there is a maiden more beautiful than I."

They stopped fighting, put down the rope swing, and drew up the Tsaritsa of the Golden Kingdom. Again they began to fight; but the Tsaritsa, the



beauty, immediately stopped them, saying: "Your mother is waiting for you." They drew out their mother, and let down the rope swing for Ivan Tsarevich; they raised him half way, and cut the rope. Ivan Tsarevich fell into the depth and was terribly shocked; he lay half a year without senses, came to himself, and looked around, remembered everything that had happened to him, took out the feather staff, and struck the earth with it. That moment twelve youths appeared. "What is thy command, Ivan Tsarevich?"

"Take me out into the free world."

The youths seized him under the arms and bore him into the free world. Ivan Tsarevich inquired about his brothers, and heard that they had married long before. The Tsaritsa of the Copper Kingdom married the second brother; the Tsaritsa of the Silver Kingdom, his eldest brother; but his own bride would not marry any man: his old father wanted to marry her. He summoned a council, accused his wife of intimacy with evil spirits, and gave command to cut her head off. After the execution he said to the Tsaritsa of the Golden Kingdom: "Wilt thou marry me?"

"I will when thou makest shoes for me without measure."

The Tsar gave command to issue a call and ask all and each, would any man make shoes for the Tsaritsa without taking her measure. At this time



Ivan Tsarevich had come to his own kingdom, and hired as a workman with a certain old man; and he sent him to the Tsar: "Go, grandfather, take this affair on thyself, and I will make the shoes for thee; but do not tell about me."

The old man went to the Tsar. "I," said he, "am ready to undertake the work."

The Tsar gave him leather for a pair of shoes, and asked: "But canst thou do it, old man?"

"Never fear, Gosudár. I have a son who is a shoemaker."

When he came home the old man gave the leather to Ivan Tsarevich, who cut it into bits and threw it out of the window; then he opened the Golden Kingdom and took out shoes already made. "Here, grandfather, take these and carry them to the Tsar."

The Tsar was delighted, and urged the bride: "Shall we go to the crown soon?"

She answered: "I will marry thee if thou wilt make for me robes to fit without measure."

The Tsar again was in trouble; he assembled all the dressmakers, and offered them much money if they would only make robes to fit without measuring the Tsaritsa.

Ivan Tsarevich said to the old man: "Grandfather, go to the Tsar, get cloth; I will sew robes for thee, but do not tell of me."

The old man dragged himself off to the palace, took satin and velvet, came home, and gave it to the



Tsarevich. Ivan Tsarevich took scissors straightway, and cut all the satin and velvet to pieces and threw them out of the window. Then he opened the Golden Kingdom and took out the most beautiful robes and gave them to the old man, saying, "Take these to the palace."

The Tsar was delighted. "Well, my beloved bride, is it not time for us to go to the crown?"

The Tsaritsa answered: "I will marry thee when thou wilt take the son of that old man and command that he be boiled in milk."

The Tsar thought awhile, then gave the command; and that day they collected three gallons of milk from each house, filled a great caldron, and boiled it on a hot fire. They brought Ivan Tsarevich. He took farewell of all, bowed to the earth, then threw himself into the caldron, dived once, dived twice, sprang out such a beauty that it could neither be told of in a tale nor described with a pen.

Said the Tsaritsa: "Look, Tsar! Whom shall I marry, — thee, old man, or that gallant youth?"

The Tsar thought awhile. "If I bathe in the milk, I shall become just such a beauty as he." He sprang into the caldron, and was cooked in a minute. But Ivan Tsarevich went to be crowned with the Tsaritsa of the Golden Kingdom; they were crowned, and began to live and live on, gaining wealth.



## KOSHCHÉI WITHOUT-DEATH.

**I**T happened that once there lived in a certain land a Tsar and a Tsaritsa. They had a son, Ivan Tsarevich. When an infant the maidens rocked him; but do what they might, they could not rock him to sleep. "Tsar, great Gosudár, come, rock thy own son." The Tsar went to rock the child: "Sleep, little son, sleep my own dear; thou wilt grow up a man. I will get thee Peerless Beauty as bride,—the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, and the sister of nine brothers." The Tsarevich went to sleep and slept for three days and three nights; woke up, and cried more than before.

The maidens rock him, but they cannot rock him to sleep; they call his father: "Tsar, great Gosudár, come, rock thy own son."

The Tsar rocked him, saying, "Sleep, little son, sleep, my own dear; thou wilt grow up a man. I will get thee Peerless Beauty as bride, the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, and the sister of nine brothers." The Tsarevich fell asleep, and again slept three days and three nights. He woke up and cried more than ever.

The maidens rock him, they cannot rock him to



sleep. "Come, Tsar, great Gosudár," said they, "rock thy own son."

The Tsar rocked him, saying the while, "Sleep, little son, sleep, my own dear; thou wilt grow up a man. I will get thee Peerless Beauty as bride, the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers."

The Tsarevich fell asleep and slept again three days and three nights. He woke up and said, "Give thy blessing, father; I am going to marry."

"What dost thou mean, my dear little child? Whither canst thou go? Thou art but nine days of age in all."

"If thou wilt give me thy blessing, I'll go; if not, I'll go also."

"Well, the Lord guide thee."

Ivan Tsarevich arrayed himself, and went to find a horse. He went a short way from the house, and met an old man. "Where art thou going, young man," asked he, — "of thy own will, or against thy will?"

"I will not talk with thee," answered the Tsarevich. He went on a little, changed his mind. "Why did I not say something to the old man. Old people bring us to sense." Straightway he overtook the old man. "Stop, grandfather. Of what didst thou ask me?"

"I asked where art thou going, young man, — of thy own will, or against thy will?"

"I go so much of my own will, and twice that much



against my will. I was in early years; my father rocked me in the cradle; he promised to get me Peerless Beauty as bride."

"Thou art a good youth, thou art well spoken; but thou canst not go on foot. Peerless Beauty dwells far away."

"How far?"

"In the Golden Kingdom, at the end of the white world, where the sun comes up."

"What am I to do? I, young man, have no saddle-horse unriden, and silken whip unused that are fitting for me."

"Why hast thou not? Thy father has thirty horses all alike. Go home, tell the grooms to water them at the blue sea; and whichever horse shall push ahead, enter the water to its neck, and when it drinks, waves rise on the blue sea and roll from shore to shore, that one take."

"God save thee for the good word, grandfather!"

As the old man taught him, so did the Tsarevich do, — he chose for himself an heroic steed, passed the night, rose next morning early, opened the gate, and was preparing to go.

The horse spoke to him in the language of men: "Ivan Tsarevich, drop to the earth; I will push thee three times." He pushed him once, he pushed him twice; but the third time he pushed not. "If thou wert pushed a third time, the earth would not bear thee and me."



Ivan Tsarevich took his horse from the chains, saddled him, sat on him. The Tsar barely sees his son. He rides far, far. The day is growing short, night is coming on. A house stood like a town, each room is a chamber. He came to the house, straight to the porch, tied his horse to the copper ring, went into the first chamber, then into the second, prayed to God, asked to spend the night.

“Stay the night, good youth,” said an old woman. “Whither is God bearing thee?”

“Old woman, thou dost ask impolitely. First give me to eat and to drink, put me to rest, and then ask me for news.”

She gave him food and drink, put him to bed, and then asked for news.

“I was, grandmother,” said he, “in tender years; my father rocked me in the cradle, and promised me Peerless Beauty as bride, — the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, and the sister of nine brothers.”

“Thou art a good youth, and fair spoken. I am living to the end of the seventh ten of years, and of that beauty I have not heard. Farther on the road lives my elder sister; maybe she knows. But sleep now; the morning is wiser than the evening.”

Ivan Tsarevich passed the night; next morning he rose early, washed himself white, led forth his steed, saddled him, put his foot in the stirrup. The old woman merely saw him. He rode far with distance,



high with height; the day was shortening, coming toward night. There stood a house like a town, each room was a chamber. He rode to the porch, tied his horse to a silver ring, went to the entrance, and then to the chamber, prayed to God, asked a night's lodging. An old woman said: "Tfu, tfu! so far a Russian bone was not seen with sight nor heard with hearing; but now a Russian bone has come itself to the house. Where hast thou come from, Ivan Tsarevich?"

"Oh, thou old hag, how angry thou art! Thou dost not ask with politeness; thou shouldst first give me food and drink, put me to rest, then ask for news."

She seated him at the table, gave him food and drink, put him to rest, sat at the head of the bed, and inquired: "Where is God bearing thee?"

"I was in tender years, grandmother; my father rocked me in the cradle and promised me Peerless Beauty as bride, — the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, and the sister of nine brothers."

"Thou art a good youth, of kind speech. I am living toward the end of the eighth ten of years, and of that beauty I have never heard. Before thee on the road lives my elder sister, — mayhap she knows; she has answer-givers. Her first answer-givers are the beasts of the forests, the second are the birds of the air, the third are the fish and creatures of the sea. Whatever is in the white world obeys her. Go to her



in the morning, but sleep now; the morning is wiser than the evening."

Ivan Tsarevich passed the night, rose early, washed himself very white, sat on his steed, and vanished. He rode far with distance, high with height. The day was growing short, drawing near to the night; and there stood a house like a town, each room was a chamber. He came to the porch, tied his horse to a golden ring, then went to the entrance, and next to the chamber, prayed to God, and asked a night's lodging. An old woman screamed at him. "Oh, thou, this and that kind of man, thou art not worthy of an iron ring, and thou hast tied thy horse to a gold one!"

"Well, grandmother, scold not; the horse may be loosed and tied to another ring."

"Oh, good hero, have I given thee a fright? Be not afraid; sit on the bench, and I will ask from what stock, from what town, thou dost come."

"Oh, grandmother, thou shouldst first give me food and drink, then ask for the news! Thou seest I'm a wayfaring man; I've not eaten all day."

Straightway the old woman set the table, brought bread and salt, poured out a glass of *vodka*, and began to entertain Ivan Tsarevich. He ate and drank plenty, threw himself on the bed. The old woman made no inquiry; he told her himself: "I was in tender years, my father rocked me in the cradle, promised me Peerless Beauty as bride, — the daughter



of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, and the sister of nine brothers. Do me a kindness, grandmother; tell me where Peerless Beauty is living, and how I may reach her."

"But, Ivan Tsarevich, I know not myself; I am ending the ninth ten of years, and I have not heard of that beauty. But sleep now with God; in the morning I will summon my answer-givers, — maybe one of them knows."

Next day the old woman rose early, washed herself very white, came out with Ivan Tsarevich on the porch, cried with a champion's voice, whistled with a hero's whistle. She cried to the sea-fish and creatures of the water, "Come hither."

That instant the blue sea boiled up, the fish, great and small, came together, all creatures assembled and went toward the shore; they covered the water.

The old woman asked: "Where lives Peerless Beauty, the daughter of three mothers, the granddaughter of three grandmothers, the sister of nine brothers?"

All the fish and all the creatures answered in one voice: "We have not seen her with sight, nor heard of her with hearing."

The old woman shouted over the land: "Assemble, ye beasts of the forest."

The beasts run; they hide the earth. In one voice they answer: "We have not seen her with sight, nor heard her with hearing."



The old woman cried toward the sky: "Come hither, ye birds of the air!"

The birds fly, they hide the light of day. In one voice they answer: "We have not seen her with sight, we have not heard her with hearing."

"There is no one else to ask," said the old woman. She took Ivan Tsarevich by the hand and led him into the room. They had just come in when the Mogol bird arrived on the wing, fell to the ground. There was no light in the window.

"Oh, thou Mogol bird, where hast thou been flying; why art thou late?"

"I was arraying Peerless Beauty for mass."

"Thou hast the news I need. Now do me a service with faith and truth, — carry Ivan Tsarevich to her."

"Gladly would I serve, but much food is needed."

"How much?"

"Three forties of beef, and a vessel of water."

Ivan Tsarevich filled the vessel with water, brought oxen with beef. He put the kegs on the bird, ran to the forge, and had a long iron lance made for himself; he came back and took farewell of the old woman. "Good-by," said he. "Feed my good steed enough; I will pay thee for everything."

He sat on the Mogol bird, and that moment it rose up and flew; it flew and looked around continually. When it looked, Ivan Tsarevich immediately gave a piece of meat on the end of his lance. Now



it was flying and flying no short time. The Tsarevich had already given two kegs of beef, and had begun on the third; and he said, "O Mogol bird, fall to the damp earth; small nourishment is left."

"What art thou saying, Ivan Tsarevich? Below us are sleeping forests and sticky morasses; we could not escape to the end of our lives."

Ivan Tsarevich gave out all the beef and threw down the kegs; but the Mogol bird flies, looks around. What can be done? Ivan Tsarevich thought a while, cut off the calves of his own legs, and gave them to the bird. It swallowed them, and flew out over the green meadow, silken grass, blue flowers, then dropped to the earth. Ivan Tsarevich stood on his feet, walked along the meadow, was lame of both legs.

"What is the matter, Ivan Tsarevich? Art thou lame?"

"I am lame, Mogol bird; a little while ago I cut off my calves to nourish thee."

The Mogol bird coughed up the calves, put them on the legs of Ivan Tsarevich, blew and spat; the calves grew to their places, and the Tsarevich went on in strength and activity. He came to a great town, and stopped to rest with a grandmother living in a backyard.

"Sleep, Ivan Tsarevich; in the morning, when the bell rings, I'll rouse thee."



Ivan Tsarevich lay down and slept that minute; he slept the day, slept the night. The bells rang for early prayers, the backyard grandmother ran to him, fell to beating him with whatever she found at hand, but could not rouse him. The morning prayers were over, they rang for mass; Peerless Beauty went to church. The old grandmother came again, and went to work again at Ivan Tsarevich, beat him with whatever came under her hands; with great effort she woke him. Ivan Tsarevich sprang up very quickly, washed himself very white, dressed, and went to mass. He came to the church, prayed before the images, bowed down on every side, and especially to Peerless Beauty. They stood side by side and prayed. At the end of mass she went first to the cross, then he went out on a platform, looked at the blue sea; ships are approaching, six champions came to offer marriage.

The champions saw Ivan Tsarevich and began to ridicule him: "Oh, thou country clown, is such a beauty as this for thee? Thou art not worth her middle finger!"

They said this once, they said it twice, they said it thrice. Ivan Tsarevich was offended. He swung his arm, there was a street; he swung it a second time, the place was clear and smooth all around. Then he went to the old grandmother.

"Well, Ivan Tsarevich, hast thou seen Peerless Beauty?"



“I have, and I shall not forget her for an age.”

“Now lie down to sleep. To-morrow thou wilt go to mass again; I will wake thee the minute the bell rings.”

The Tsarevich lay down; he slept the day, he slept the night. The bell rang for early prayers; the grandmother ran to him, began to rouse him; whatever happened under her hand, with that she beat him; but she could n't wake him. They rang the bell for mass; again she beat him and roused him. Ivan Tsarevich sprang up very quickly, washed very white, dressed, and to church. He entered, prayed to the images, bowed on all four sides, especially to Peerless Beauty. She looked at him and blushed. They stood side by side, prayed to God. At the end of mass she went to the cross first, he second. The Tsarevich went out on a platform, looked on the blue sea; ships were sailing, twelve champions came. They began to ask Peerless Beauty in marriage, and to make sport of Ivan Tsarevich: “Oh, thou country clown, is such a beauty for thee? Thou art not worth her middle finger!”

He was offended at these speeches. He swung his arm, there was a street; he swung the other, the place was clear and smooth around.

He went to the old grandmother. “Hast thou seen Peerless Beauty?” asked she.

“I have, and for an age I shall not forget her.”



“Well, sleep now; in the morning I will wake thee.”

Ivan Tsarevich slept the day, he slept the night; they rang the bell for morning prayers; the old woman ran in to wake him, beat him with whatever happened under her hand, did not spare, but could not rouse him. They rang the bell for mass, and she was working away all the time at the Tsarevich. At last she roused him. He rose up quickly, washed himself very white, prepared, dressed, and to church. When he came he prayed to the images, bowed on all four sides, and separately to Peerless Beauty. She saluted him, put him at her right hand, and she stood at the left. They stand there, pray to God. At the end of mass he went first to the cross, she after him. The Tsarevich went out on the platform, looked on the blue sea; ships are sailing, and twenty-four champions come to offer marriage to Peerless Beauty.

The champions saw Ivan Tsarevich and straight-way began to make sport of him: “Oh, country clown, is such a beauty for thee? Thou art not worth her middle finger!”

They attacked him on every side to take away his bride. Ivan Tsarevich did not endure this. He swung his arm, there was a street; he swung the other, the place was smooth and clear around. He killed all to the last man. Peerless Beauty took him by the hand, led him to her chambers, seated him at the oaken tables, at the spread cloths, entertained



him, called him her bridegroom. Soon after they prepared for the road and set out for the land of Ivan Tsarevich. They travelled and travelled, halted in the open field to rest. Peerless Beauty lay down to sleep, and Ivan Tsarevich guarded her slumber. When she had slept enough, and woke up, the Tsarevich said: "Peerless Beauty, guard my white body; I will lie down to sleep."

"But wilt thou sleep long?"

"Nine days and nights; and I shall not turn from one side to the other. If thou tryest to wake me, thou wilt not rouse me. When the time comes I shall wake myself."

"It is long, Ivan Tsarevich; I shall be wearied."

"Wearied or not, there is no help for it."

He lay down to sleep, and slept exactly nine days and nights. Meanwhile Koshchéi Without-Death bore away Peerless Beauty to his own kingdom. Ivan Tsarevich woke up; there was no Peerless Beauty. He began to weep, and went along neither by the road nor the way. Whether it was long or short, he came to the kingdom of Koshchéi Without-Death, and begged lodgings of an old woman.

"Well, Ivan Tsarevich, why art thou so sad looking?"

"Thus and thus, grandmother; I had everything, now I have nothing."

"Thy affair is a bad one, Ivan Tsarevich; thou canst not kill Koshchéi."



“ Well, I will look on my bride at least.”

“ Lie down, sleep till morning ; to-morrow Koshchéi will go to war.”

Ivan Tsarevich lay down, but sleep did not come to his mind. In the morning Koshchéi went out of the house, and Ivan Tsarevich went in. He stood at the gate and knocked. Peerless Beauty opened it, looked at him, and fell to weeping. They went to the upper chamber, sat at the table, and talked. Ivan Tsarevich instructed her. “ Ask Koshchéi where his death is.”

“ I will.”

He had just left the house when Koshchéi came in. “ Oh ! ” said he, “ it smells of the Russian bone ; it must be that Ivan Tsarevich was with thee.”

“ What art thou thinking of, Koshchéi Without-Death ? Where could I see Ivan Tsarevich. He has remained in slumbering forests and in sticky quagmires ; wild beasts have destroyed him ere now.”

They sat down to sup. At supper Peerless Beauty said : “ Tell me, Koshchéi Without-Death, where is thy death ? ”

“ Why dost thou wish to know, silly woman ? My death is tied up in the broom.”

Early next morning Koshchéi went to war. Ivan Tsarevich came to Peerless Beauty. She took the broom, gilded it brightly with pure gold. The Tsarevich had just departed when Koshchéi came



in. "Ah!" said he, "it smells of the Russian bone; Ivan Tsarevich has been with thee."

"What dost thou mean, Koshchéi Without-Death? Thou hast been flying through Russia thyself and hast caught up the odor of Russia; it is from thee. Where should I see Ivan Tsarevich?"

At supper Peerless Beauty sat on a small bench and seated Koshchéi on a large one. He looked under the threshold; the broom was lying there gilded. "What does this mean?"

"Oh, Koshchéi Without-Death, thou seest thyself how I honor thee!"

"Oh, simple woman, I was joking! My death is out there, fastened in the oak fence."

Next day Koshchéi went away. Ivan Tsarevich came and gilded the whole fence. Towards evening Koshchéi came home. "Ah!" said he, "it smells of the Russian bone. Ivan Tsarevich has been with thee."

"What dost thou mean, Koshchéi Without-Death? It seems I have told thee times more than one, where am I to see Ivan Tsarevich? He has remained in dark forests, in sticky quagmires; the wild beasts have torn him to pieces ere now."

Supper-time came. Peerless Beauty sat on a bench herself, and seated him on a chair. Koshchéi looked through the window, saw the fence gilded, shining like fire. "What is that?"

"Thou seest thyself, Koshchéi, how I respect thee."



If thou art dear to me, of importance is thy death."

This speech pleased Koshchéi Without-Death. "Oh, simple woman, I was joking with thee! My death is in an egg, the egg is in a duck, and the duck is in a stump floating on the sea."

When Koshchéi went off to war, Peerless Beauty baked cakes for Ivan Tsarevich and told him where to look for the death of Koshchéi. Ivan Tsarevich went neither by road nor by way, came to the ocean sea broad, and knew not where to go farther. The cakes had long since given out, and he had nothing to eat. All at once a hawk flew up. Ivan Tsarevich aimed. "Well, hawk, I'll shoot thee and eat thee raw."

"Do not eat me, Ivan Tsarevich; I will serve thee in time of need."

A bear ran along. "Oh, bear, crooked paw, I'll kill thee and eat thee raw!"

"Do not eat me, Ivan Tsarevich; I'll serve in time of need."

Behold, a pike is struggling on the beach. "Oh, big-toothed pike, thou hast come to it! I'll eat thee raw."

"Eat me not, Ivan Tsarevich; better throw me into the sea. I will serve thee in time of need."

Ivan stood there thinking, "The time of need will come, it is unknown when. But now I must go hungry." All at once the blue sea boiled up, waves rose, began to cover the shore. Ivan Tsarevich ran



up the hill, ran with all his might, and the water followed at his heels; chasing, he ran to the very highest place and climbed a tree. A little later the water began to fall, the sea grew calm, fell, and a great stump was left on land. The bear ran up, raised the stump, and when he had hurled it to the ground the stump opened; out flew a duck and soared high, high. That minute, from wherever he came, the hawk flew, caught the duck, and in a twinkling tore her in two. An egg fell out; then the pike caught it, swam to the beach, and gave the egg to Ivan Tsarevich, who put it in his bosom and went to Koshchéi Without-Death. He came to the house. Peerless Beauty met him, she kissed him on the lips and fell on his shoulder. Koshchéi Without-Death was sitting at the window cursing.

“Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, thou wishest to take Peerless Beauty from me; and so thou wilt not live.”

“Thou didst take her from me thyself,” answered Ivan Tsarevich, took the egg from his bosom, and showed it to Koshchéi. “What is this?”

The light grew dim in the eyes of Koshchéi; then he became mild and obedient. Ivan Tsarevich threw the egg from one hand to the other. Koshchéi Without-Death staggered from corner to corner. This seemed pleasant to the Tsarevich. He threw the egg more quickly from hand to hand, and broke it; then Koshchéi fell and died.

Ivan Tsarevich attached the horses to his golden



carriage, took whole bags filled with gold and silver, and went to his father. Whether it was long or short, he came to that old woman who had inquired of every creature, fish, bird, and beast. He found his steed. "Glory be to God," said he, "the raven (black steed) is alive;" and he poured forth gold freely for her care of the steed. Though she were to live ninety-nine years longer, she would have enough. Then the Tsarevich sent a swift courier to the Tsar with a letter, in which he wrote: "Father, meet thy son; I am coming with my bride, Peerless Beauty."

His father got the letter, read it, and had not belief. "How could that be? Ivan Tsarevich left home when nine days old!" After the courier came the Tsarevich himself. The Tsar saw that his son had written the real truth; he ran out to the porch, met him, and gave command to beat drums and sound music.

"Father, bless me for the wedding."

Tsars have not to brew beer nor make wine; they have much of all things. That same day there was a joyous feast and a wedding. They crowned Ivan Tsarevich and Peerless Beauty, and put out on all streets great jars of various drinks; every one could come and drink what his soul desired. I was there, drank mead and wine; it flowed on my mustaches, but was not in my mouth.



VASSILISSA GOLDEN TRESS, BAREHEADED  
BEAUTY.

THERE lived a Tsar Svaitozar. This Tsar had two sons and a beauty of a daughter. Twenty years did she live in her bright chamber. The Tsar and Tsaritsa admired her, and so did the nurses and maidens; but no one of the princes and champions had seen her face. And this beauty was called Vassilissa Golden Tress. She went nowhere out of her chamber; the Tsarevna did not breathe the free air. She had many bright dresses and jewels, but was wearied; it was oppressive for her in the chamber. Her robes were a burden, her thick golden silk hair, covered with nothing, bound in a tress, fell to her feet, and people called her Vassilissa Golden Tress, Bareheaded Beauty. The kingdom was filled with her fame. Many Tsars heard of her and sent envoys to Tsar Svaitozar to beat with the forehead and ask the Tsarevna in marriage.

The Tsar was in no hurry, but when the time came, he sent messengers to all lands with tidings that the Tsarevna would choose a bridegroom; and inviting Tsars and Tsareviches to assemble and collect at his palace to feast, he went himself to the lofty chamber



to tell Vassilissa the Beautiful. It was gladsome in the heart of the Tsarevna. Looking out of the sloping window from behind the golden lattice on the green garden, the flowery meadow, she was eager to walk; she asked him to let her go forth to the garden to play with the maidens. "My sovereign father," said she, "I have not seen the world of God yet, I have not walked on the grass, on the flowers, I have not looked on thy palace; let me go with my nurses and maidens to walk in thy garden."

The Tsar permitted, and Vassilissa the Beautiful went down from the lofty chamber to the broad court. The plank gate was open, and she appeared in the green meadow. In front was a steep mountain; on that mountain grew curly trees; on the meadow were beautiful flowers of many kinds. The Tsarevna plucked blue flowers, stepped aside a little from her nurses; there was no caution in her young mind; her face was exposed, her beauty uncovered. Suddenly a mighty whirlwind rose, such as had not been seen, heard of, or remembered by old people; the whirlwind turned and twisted — behold, it seized the Tsarevna and carried her through the air.

The nurses screamed and shrieked: they ran and stumbled, threw themselves on every side; they saw nothing but how the whirlwind shot away with her. And Vassilissa Golden Tress was borne over many lands, across deep rivers, through three kingdoms into the fourth, into the dominions of the Savage Serpent.



The nurses hurry to the palace, covering themselves with tears, throw themselves at the feet of the Tsar. "Sovereign, we are not answerable for the misfortune, we are answerable to thee. Give not command to slay us, command us to speak. The whirlwind bore away our sun, Vassilissa Golden Tress, the Beauty, and it is unknown whither."

The Tsar was sad, he was angry; but in his anger he pardoned the poor women.

Next morning the princes and kings' sons came to the Tsar's palace, and seeing the sadness and seriousness of the Tsar they asked him what had happened.

"There is a sin to my account," said the Tsar. "My dear daughter, Vassilissa Golden Tress, has been borne away by the whirlwind, I know not whither;" and he told everything as it had happened.

Talk rose among the guests, and the princes and kings' sons thought and talked among themselves. "Is not the Tsar refusing us; is he not unwilling to let us see his daughter?" They rushed to the chamber of the Tsarevna; nowhere did they find her.

The Tsar made them presents, gave to each one from his treasure. They mounted their steeds, he conducted them with honor; the bright guests took farewell, and went to their own lands.

The two young Tsareviches, brave brothers of Vassilissa Golden Tress, seeing the tears of their father and mother, begged of their parents: "Let us go,



our father, — bless us, our mother, — to find your daughter, our sister.”

“ My dear sons, my own children,” said the Tsar, without joy, “ where will ye go? ”

“ We will go, father, everywhere, — where a road lies, where a bird flies, where the eyes have vision; mayhap we shall find her.”

The Tsar gave his blessing, the Tsaritsa prepared them for the journey; they wept, and they parted.

The two Tsareviches journeyed on. Whether the road was near or far, long in going or short, they did not know. They travelled a year, they travelled two. They passed three kingdoms, lofty mountains were visible and seemed blue; between these mountains were sandy plains, — the land of the Savage Serpent. And the Tsareviches inquired of those whom they met had they not heard, had they not seen, where Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress was. And from all the answer was one: “ We know not where she is, and we have not heard.”

The Tsar’s sons approach a great town; a decrepit old man stands on the road; crooked-eyed and lame, with a crutch and a bag, he begs alms. The Tsareviches stopped, threw him a silver coin, and asked had he not seen, had he not heard of the Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress, Bareheaded Beauty?

“ Ah! my friend,” said the old man, “ it is clear that thou art from a strange land. Our ruler, the



Savage Serpent, has forbidden strongly and sternly to speak with men from abroad. We are forbidden under penalty to tell or relate how a whirlwind bore past the town the beautiful princess."

Now the sons of the Tsar understood that their sister was near. They urged on their restive steeds and approached the castle of gold which stood on a single pillar of silver; over the castle was a curtain of diamonds; the stairways, mother-of-pearl, opened and closed like wings.

At this moment Vassilissa the Beautiful was looking in sadness through the golden lattice, and she screamed out for joy. She knew her brothers from a distance, just as if her heart had told her. And the Tsarevna sent down in silence to meet them, to bring them to the castle; the Savage Serpent was absent.

Vassilissa the Beautiful was wary; she feared the serpent might see them. They had barely entered when the silver pillar groaned, the stairways opened, all the roofs glittered; the whole castle began to turn and move. The Tsarevna was frightened, and said to her brothers: "The serpent is coming, the serpent is coming; that's why the castle goes round! Hide, brothers!"

She had barely said this when the Savage Serpent flew in, cried with a thundering voice, and whistled with a hero's whistle: "What living man is here?"

"We, Savage Serpent," answered the Tsar's sons,



without fear; "from our birthplace we've come for our sister."

"Oh, the young men are here!" shouted the serpent, clapping his wings. "Ye should not die here from me, nor seek your sister to free; her own brothers, champions, are ye, but champions puny I see." And the serpent caught one of them with his wing, struck him against the other, whistled and shouted. The castle guard ran to him, took the dead Tsareviches, threw them both down a deep ditch.

The Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress covered herself with tears, took neither food nor drink, would not look on the world. Two days and three passed. It was not right she should die, she did not decide to die; she took pity on her beauty, took counsel of hunger. On the third day she ate, and was thinking how to free herself from the serpent, and began to gain knowledge by wheedling.

"Savage Serpent," said she, "great is thy power, mighty thy flight: is it possible that thou hast no foe?"

"Not yet," replied the serpent; "it was fated at my birth that my foe should be Ivan Goroh [John Pea]; and he will be born from a pea."

The serpent said this in jest; he expected no foe. The strong one relied on his strength; but the jest came true.

The mother of Vassilissa Golden Tress was grieving because she had no news of her children after the Tsarevna, the Tsareviches, were lost.



She went one day to walk in the garden with her ladies; the day was hot, she was thirsty. In that garden, from a foot-hill, spring water ran forth in a stream, and above it was a white marble well. They drew, with a golden cup, water pure as a tear. The Tsaritsa was eager to drink, and with the water she swallowed a pea. The pea burst, and the Tsaritsa became heavy; the pea increased and grew. In time the Tsaritsa gave birth to a son; they called him Ivan Goroh, and he grew, not by the year, but by the hour, smooth and plump; he is lively, laughs, jumps, springs on the sand, and his strength is growing in him all the time, so that at ten years he was a mighty champion. Then he asked the Tsar and Tsaritsa if he had had many brothers and sisters, and he heard how it happened that the whirlwind had borne away his sister, it was unknown whither, how his two brothers had begged to go in search of their sister, and were lost without tidings.

“Father, mother,” begged Ivan Goroh, “let me go too; give me your blessing to find my brothers and sister.”

“What art thou saying, my child?” asked the Tsar and Tsaritsa at once. “Thou art still green and young; thy brothers went, they were lost, thou wilt go too and be lost.”

“Mayhap I shall not be lost,” said Ivan Goroh. “I want to find my brothers and sister.”

The Tsar and Tsaritsa persuaded and begged their



dear son, but he craved, cried, and entreated. They prepared him for the road, let him go with tears.

Ivan Goroh was free. He went out into the open field, travelled one day, travelled another. Toward night he came to a dark forest; in that forest was a cabin on hen's legs; from the wind it was shaking and turning. Ivan spoke from the old saying, from his nurse's tale. "Cabin, cabin," said he, "turn thy back to the forest, thy front to me;" and the cabin turned around to Ivan. Out of the window an old woman was looking, and she asked, "Whom is God bringing?"

Ivan bowed, and hastened to ask: "Hast thou not seen, grandmother, in what direction the passing whirlwind carries beautiful maidens?"

"Oh, young man," said she, coughing, and looking at Ivan, "that whirlwind has frightened me too, so that I sit in this cabin a hundred and twenty years, and I go out nowhere! Maybe he would fly up and sweep me away. That's not a whirlwind, but the Savage Serpent."

"How could one go to him?" asked Ivan.

"What art thou thinking of, my world? The serpent will swallow thee."

"Maybe he will not swallow me."

"See to it, champion, or thou wilt not save thy head. But shouldst thou come back, give me thy word to bring from the serpent's castle water with which, if a man sprinkles himself, he will grow young," said she, moving her teeth beyond measure.



“I will get it, grandmother, I give thee my word.”

“I believe thee, on conscience! Go straight to where the sun sets. In one year thou wilt reach the bald mountain there; ask for the road to the serpent’s kingdom.”

“God save thee, grandmother!”

“There is no reason for thanks, father.”

Well, Ivan Goroh went to the land where the sun sets. A story is soon told, but a deed’s not soon done. He passed three kingdoms, and went to the serpent’s land; before the gates of the town he saw a beggar, — a lame, blind old man with a crutch, — and giving him charity, he asked if the young Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress was in that town.

“She is, but it is forbidden to say so,” answered the beggar.

Ivan knew that his sister was there; the good, bold hero became courageous, and went to the palace. At that time Vassilissa Golden Tress was looking out of the window to see if the Savage Serpent was coming; and she saw from afar the young champion, wished to know of him, sent quietly to learn from what land he had come, of what stock was he, was he sent by her father or by her own mother.

Hearing that Ivan, her youngest brother, had come (and she did not know him by sight), Vassilissa ran to him, wet him with tears. “Run, brother, quickly!” cried she. “The serpent will soon be here; he will see thee, destroy thee.”



“ My dear sister,” answered Ivan, “ if another had spoken, I should not have listened. I have no fear of the serpent, no fear of his strength.”

“ But art thou Goroh,” asked Vassilissa Golden Tress, “ to manage him? ”

“ Wait, friend sister ; first give me to drink. I have travelled under heat, I am tired from the road ; I want a drink.”

“ What dost thou drink, brother? ”

“ Three gallons of sweet mead, dear sister.”

Vassilissa gave command to bring a three-gallon measure of sweet mead, and Goroh drank it all at one breath. He asked for another ; the Tsarevna gave orders to hurry, looked, and wondered.

“ Well, brother, I did not know thee ; but now I believe that thou art Ivan Goroh ! ”

“ Let me sit down a moment to rest from the road.”

Vassilissa gave command to bring a strong chair ; but the chair broke under Ivan, flew into bits. They brought another all bound with iron, and that one cracked and bent. “ Oh, brother,” cried Vassilissa, “ that is the chair of the Savage Serpent ! ”

“ Now it is clear that I am heavier than he,” said Goroh, laughing.

He rose and went on the street, went from the castle to the forge ; there he ordered the old sage, the serpent’s blacksmith, to forge him an iron club of nine tons weight. The blacksmith hastened the work.



They hammered the iron; night and day the hammers thundered, the sparks just flying. In forty hours the work was done. Fifty men were barely able to carry the club; but Ivan Goroh, seizing it in one hand, hurled the club to the sky: it flew, roared like a storm, whirled above the clouds, vanished from the eye. All the people ran trembling from terror, thinking if that club falls on the town, it will break the walls and crush the people; if it falls in the sea, it will raise the sea and flood the town. But Ivan Goroh went quietly to the castle, and gave command to tell when the club was coming. The people ran from the square, looked from under the gate, looked out of windows. "Is n't the club coming?" They waited an hour, they waited two; the third hour they ran to say that the club was coming. Goroh sprang to the square, put forth his hand, caught the club as it came, bent not himself, but the iron bent on the palm of his hand. Ivan took the club, pressed it against his knee, straightened it, went to the castle.

All at once a terrible whistling was heard, the Savage Serpent was racing; Whirlwind, his steed, flying like an arrow, breathes fire. The serpent in shape is a champion, but his head is the head of a serpent. When he flies, the whole castle quivers; when he is ten versts distant, it begins to whirl and dance. But now the castle moves not: it is clear that some one is sitting inside. The serpent grew thought-



ful, whistled, shouted; the whirlwind steed shook his dark mane, opened his broad wings, reared and roared.

The serpent flew up to the castle, but the castle moves not. "Ho!" roared the Savage Serpent, "it is plain there is a foe. Is not Goroh at my house?" Soon came the champion. "I'll put thee on the palm of one hand, and slap with the other: they won't find thy bones."

"We shall see," said Ivan Goroh.

He went out with his club, and the serpent cried from his whirlwind: "Take thy place in a hurry."

"Take thy own place, Savage Serpent," said Ivan, and raised his club.

The Savage Serpent flew up to strike Ivan, to pierce him with his spear, and missed. Goroh sprang to one side, did not stagger.

"Now I'll finish thee!" roared Goroh. Raising his club, he struck the serpent a blow that tore him to pieces, scattered him; the club went across the earth, went through two kingdoms into a third.

The people hurled up their caps and saluted Ivan Tsar. But Ivan seeing the wise blacksmith, as a reward for having made the club quickly, he called up the old man and said to the people: "Here is your head; obey him while doing good, as before ye obeyed the Savage Serpent for evil."

Ivan got also the water of life and the water of death, sprinkled his brothers; they rose up, rubbed



their eyes and thought, "We slept long; God knows what has happened."

"Without me you would have slept forever, my dear brothers," said Ivan Goroh, pressing them to his restive heart.

He did not forget to take the serpent's water; he made a ship, and on the Swan's river sailed with Vassilissa Golden Tress to his own land through three kingdoms into the fourth. He did not forget the old woman in the cabin; he let her wash in the serpent's water. She turned into a young woman, began to sing and dance, ran out after Goroh, and conducted him to the road.

His father and mother met him with joy and honor. They sent messengers to all lands with tidings that their daughter Vassilissa had returned. In the town there was ringing, and in the ears triple ringing; trumpets sounded, drums were beaten, guns thundered.

A bridegroom came to Vassilissa, and a bride was found for the Tsarevich; they had four crowns made, and celebrated two weddings. At the rejoicing, at the gladness, there was a feast as a mountain, and mead a river.

The grandfathers of grandfathers were there; they drank mead, and it came to us, flowed on our mustaches, but reached not our mouths. Only it became known that Ivan, after the death of his father, received the crown, and ruled the land with renown; and age after age the name of Goroh was famous.



## THE RING WITH TWELVE SCREWS.

THERE lived in a village a son with his mother, and the mother was a very old woman. The son was called Ivan the Fool. They lived in a poor little cottage with one window, and in great poverty. Such was their poverty that besides dry bread they ate almost nothing, and sometimes they had not even the dry bread. The mother would sit and spin, and Ivan the Fool would lie on the stove, roll in the ashes, and never wipe his nose. His mother would say to him time and again: "Ivanushka, thou art sitting there with thy nose unwiped. Why not go somewhere, even to the public-house? Some kind man may come along and take thee to work. Thou wouldst have even a bit of bread, while at home here we have nothing to keep the life in us."

"Very well, I'll go," said Ivan. He rose up and went to the public-house. On the way a man met him.

"Where art thou going, Ivan?"

"I am going to hire out to work."

"Come, work for me; I'll give thee such and such wages, and other things too."

Ivan agreed. He went to work.



The man had a dog with whelps; one of the whelps pleased Ivan greatly, and he trained it. A year passed, and the time came to pay wages for the work. The man was giving Ivan money, but he answered: "I need not thy money; give me that whelp of thine that I trained."

The man was glad that he had not to pay money, and gave the whelp.

Ivan went home; and when his mother found what he had done, she began to cry, saying: "All people are people, but thou art a fool; we had nothing to eat, and now there is another life to support."

Ivan the Fool said nothing, sat on the stove with unwiped nose, rolling in the ashes, and the whelp with him. Some time passed; whether it was short or long, his mother said again: "Why art thou sitting there without sense; why not go to the public-house? Some good man may come along and hire thee."

"Very good, I'll go," said the Fool.

He took his dog and started. A man met him on the road.

"Where art thou going, Ivan?"

"To find service," said he; "to hire out."

"Come, work for me."

"Very well," said Ivan.

They agreed, and Ivan went again to work; and that man had a cat with kittens. One of the kittens pleased the Fool, and he trained it. The time came for payment.



Ivan the Fool said to this man: "I need not thy money, but give me that kitten."

"If thou wilt have it," said the man.

Now the Fool went home, and his mother cried more than before. "All people are people, but thou wert born a fool. We had nothing to eat, and now we must support two useless lives!"

It was bitter for Ivan to hear this. He took his dog and cat and went out into the field. He saw in the middle of the field a fire burning in a great pile of wood,—such an awful pile of wood! When he drew nearer he saw that a snake was squirming in it, burning on hot coals.

The snake screamed to him in a human voice: "Oh, Ivan the Fool, save me! I will give thee a great ransom for my life."

Ivan took a stick and raised the snake out of the fire.

When he had thrown it out, there stood before him, not a snake, but a beautiful maiden; and she said: "Thanks to thee, Ivanushka. Thou hast done me great service; I will do thee still greater. We will go," said she, "to my mother. She will offer thee copper money: do not take it, because it is coals, and not money; she will offer thee silver coin: do not take that either, for that will be chips, and not silver; she will bring out to thee gold: take not even that, because instead of gold it is potsherds and broken bricks. But ask of her in reward the ring



with twelve screws. It will be hard for her to give it; but be firm, she will give it for my sake."

Behold, all took place as she said. Though the old woman grew very angry, she gave the ring. Ivan was going along through the field, thinking, "What shall I do with this ring?"

He was looking at it, when that same young girl caught up with him and said: "Ivan, whatever thou wishest, thou wilt have. Only stand in the evening on the threshold, loosen all the twelve screws, and before thee twelve thousand men will appear: whatever thou wishest, command; all will be done."

Ivan went home, said nothing to his mother, sat on the stove, lay in the ashes with unwiped nose. Evening came; they lay down to sleep.

Ivan waited for the hour, went on the threshold, unscrewed the twelve screws, and twelve thousand men stood before him. "Thou art our master, we are thy men: declare thy soul's desire."

Said Ivan to the men: "Have it made that on this very spot a castle shall stand such as there is not in the world, and that I sleep on a bedstead of gold, on down of swans, and that my mother sleep in like manner; that coachmen, outriders, servants, and all kinds of powerful people be walking in my court and serving me."

"Lie down for thyself in God's name," said the men; "all will be done at thy word."

Ivan the Fool woke up next morning, and was



frightened even himself. He looked around; he was sleeping on a golden bedstead on down of swans, and there were lofty chambers and so rich that even the Tsar had not such. In the courtyard were walking coachmen, outriders, servants, and all kinds of mighty and important people who were serving him. The Fool was amazed, and thought, "This is good." He looked in the mirror, and did not know his own self; he had become a beauty that could not be described with a pen or be told of in a tale. As was fitting, the lord was as fine as his chambers.

When the Tsar woke up at the same hour,—and the Tsar lived in that town,—he looked, and behold opposite his palace stood a castle just gleaming in gold.

The Tsar sent to learn whose it was. "Let the owner come to me," said he, "and show what sort of man he is."

They informed Ivan, and he said: "Tell him that this is the castle of Ivan Tsarevich; and if he wants to see me, he is not so great a lord, let him come himself."

There was no help for it. The Tsar had to go to Ivan the Fool's castle. They became acquainted, and after that Ivan the Fool went to the Tsar. The Tsar had a most beautiful young Tsarevna of a daughter, and she brought refreshments to Ivan; and right there she pleased him greatly, and straightway



he begged the Tsar to give her in marriage to him. Now the Tsar in his turn began to put on airs.

“Give her, — why not give her? But thou, Ivan Tsarevich, perform a service for me. My daughter is not of common stock, and therefore she must marry only the very best among the whole people. Arrange this for me, that from thy castle to mine there be a golden road, and that I have a bridge over the river, — not a common one, but such a bridge that one side shall be of gold, and the other of silver; and let all kinds of rare birds be swimming on the river, — geese and swans; and on the other side of the river let there be a church, — not a simple one, but one all wax, — and let there grow around it wax apple-trees and bear ripe apples. If thou do this, my daughter shall be thine; and if not, blame thyself.” (“Well,” thought the Tsar, “I have joked enough with Ivan Tsarevich;” but he kept his own counsel.)

“Agreed,” said Ivan. “Now do thou make ready the wedding to-morrow.” With that he departed.

In the evening, when all had lain down to sleep, he stood on the threshold, unscrewed all the screws in the ring: twelve thousand men stood before him.

“Thou art our master, we are thy men: command what thy soul desires.”

“Thus and thus,” said he; “I want this and that.”

“All right,” said they; “lie down with God.”

In the morning the Tsar woke up, went to the window; but his eyes were dazzled. He sprang back



six paces. That meant that the bridge was there, one side silver, the other gold, just blazing and shining. On the river were geese and swans and every rare bird. On the opposite bank stood a church of white wax, and around the church apple-trees, but without leaves; the naked branches were sticking up.

“Well,” thought the Tsar, “the trick has failed; we must prepare our daughter for the wedding.”

They arrayed her and drove to the church. When they were driving from the palace, buds began to come out on the apple-trees; when they were crossing the bridge, the apple-trees were coming into leaf; when they were driving up to the church, white blossoms were bursting forth on the trees; and when the time came to go home from the marriage ceremony, the servants and all kinds of people met them, gave them ripe apples on a golden salver. Then they began to celebrate the wedding. Feasts and balls were given; they had a feast which lasted three days and three nights.

After that, whether it was a short time or a long one, the Tsarevna began to tease Ivan. “Tell me, my dear husband, how dost thou do all this? How dost thou build a bridge in one night, and a wax church?”

Ivan the Fool would not tell her for a long time; but as he loved her very much, and she begged very hard, he said: “I have a ring with twelve screws, and it must be handled in such and such fashion.”



Well, they lived on. The misery of the matter was this: one of their servants pleased the Tsarevna, — he was a fine-looking, shapely, strong fellow, and she conspired with him to rob her husband, take away the ring, and the two would then go to live beyond the sea.

As soon as evening came she took out the ring quietly, stood on the threshold, and unscrewed the twelve screws: twelve thousand men stood before her.

“Thou art our mistress, we are thy men: command what thy soul desires.”

She said: “Take this castle for me and bear it beyond the sea, with all that is in it; and on this spot let the old cabin stand, with my ragged husband, Ivan the Fool, inside.”

“Lie down with God,” said the men; “all will be done on thy word.”

Next morning Ivan woke up, looked around. He was lying on a bark mat, covered with a ragged coat, and not a sign of his castle. He began to cry bitterly, and went to the Tsar, his father-in-law. He came to the palace, asked to announce to the Tsar that his son-in-law had come. When the Tsar saw him he said: “Oh, thou this and that kind of breechesless fellow, what son-in-law art thou to me? My sons-in-law live in golden chambers and ride in silver carriages. Take him and wall him up in a stone pillar.”



It was commanded and done. They took Ivan and walled him up in a stone pillar. But the cat and the dog did not leave him, they were there too, and dug out a hole for themselves; through the hole they gave food to Ivan. But one time they thought: "Why do we sit here, dog and cat, with folded hands? Let's run beyond the sea and get the ring."

As they decided to do that, they did it. They swam through the sea, found their castle. The Tsarevna was walking in the garden with the servant, laughing at her husband.

"Well, do thou remain here a while, and I'll go to the chamber and get the ring," said the cat; and she went her way, mi-au, mi-au, under the door. The Tsarevna heard her, and said: "Ah, here is that scoundrel's cat; let her in and feed her." They let her in and fed her. The cat walked through the chambers all the time and looked for the ring. She saw on the stove a glass box, and in the box the ring.

The cat was delighted. "Glory be to God!" thought she. "Now only wait for night; I'll get the ring, and then for home!"

When all had lain down, the cat sprang on to the stove and threw down the glass box; it fell, and was broken. She caught the ring in her mouth and hid under the door. All in the house were roused; the Tsarevna herself got up, and saw that the box was broken.



“Oh!” said she, “it must be the cat of that scoundrel broke it. Drive her out; drive her out!”

They chased out the cat, and she was glad; she ran to the dog.

“Well, brother dog,” said she, “I have the ring. Now if we could only get home quickly!”

They swam through the sea, were a long time swimming. When the dog was tired, he sat on the cat; when the cat was tired, she sat on the dog; and so they worked on and it was not far from land. But the dog was growing weak. The cat saw this, and said, “Sit thou on me; thou art tired.” The minute she said this the ring fell out of her mouth into the water. What was to be done? They swam to shore and wept tears. Meanwhile they grew hungry. The dog ran through the field and caught sparrows for himself, and the cat ran along the shore catching little fish thrown up by the waves; that was how she fed herself.

But all at once the cat cried out: “Oh, thou dog, come here quickly to me; I have found the ring! I caught a fish, began to eat it, and in the fish was the ring.”

Now they were both powerfully glad; they ran to Ivan and brought him the ring.

Ivan waited till evening, unscrewed all the twelve screws, and twelve thousand men stood before him.

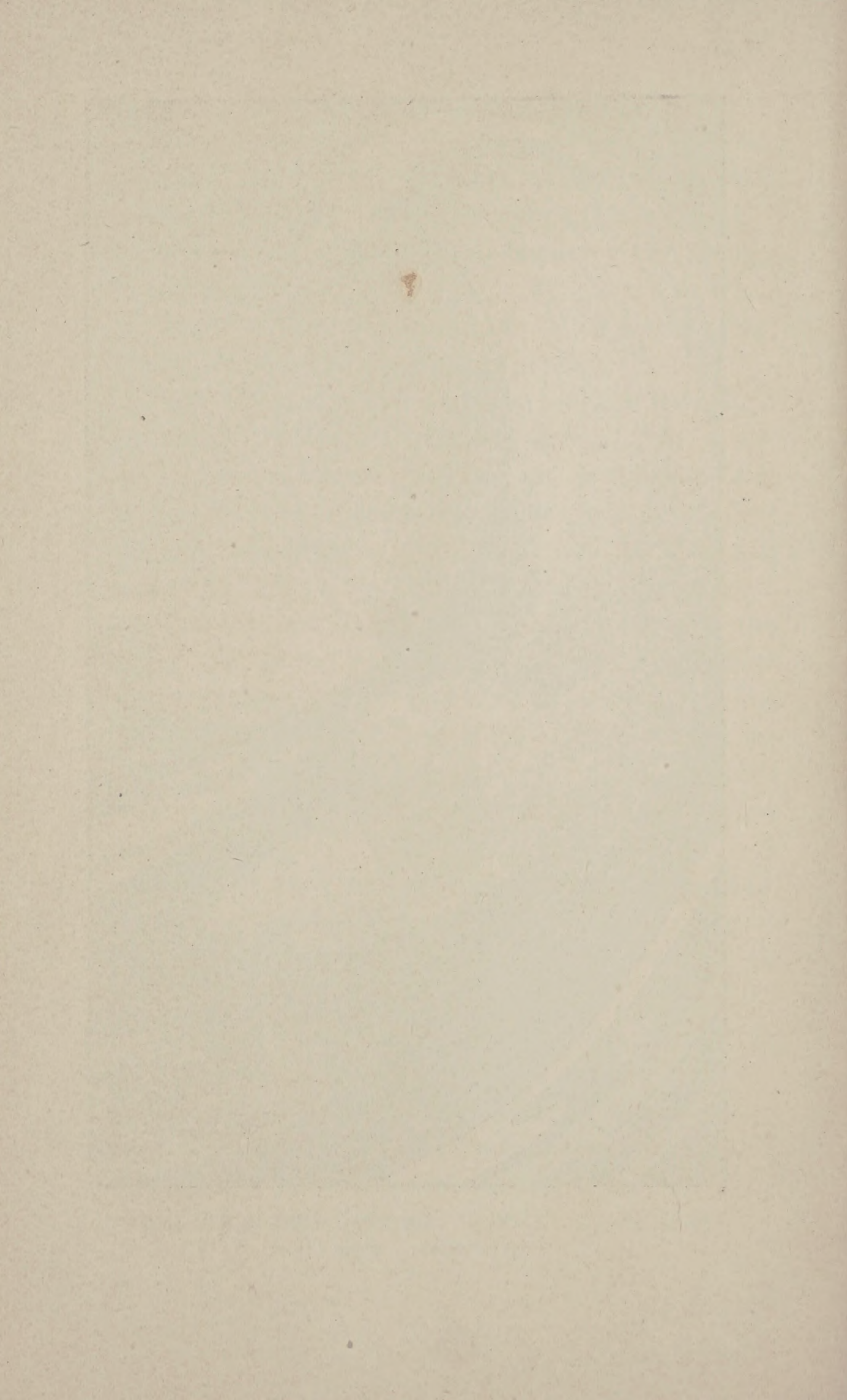
“Thou art our master, we are thy men: tell us to do what thy soul desires.”





THEY SWAM THROUGH THE SEA, WERE A LONG TIME SWIMMING. *Page 146.*







“Break in a minute this stone pillar so that dust from it shall not remain; and from beyond the sea bring hither my castle with all who are in it, and every one as sleeping now, and put it in the old place.”

Straightway all this was done. In the morning Ivan went to his father-in-law. The Tsar met him, seated him in the first place, and said: “Where hast thou been pleased to pass thy time, my dear son-in-law?”

“I was beyond the sea,” said Ivan.

“That’s it,” said the Tsar, “beyond the sea. ’Tis clear that thou hadst pressing business, for thou didst not come to take farewell of thy father-in-law. But while thou wert gone, some sort of bare-legged fellow came to me and called himself my son-in-law. I gave command to wall him up in a stone pillar; he has perished there, doubtless. Well, beloved son-in-law, where hast thou been pleased to spend thy time; what sights hast thou seen?”

“I have seen,” said Ivan, “various sights; and beyond the sea there was an affair of such kind that no man knew how to settle it.”

“What was the affair?”

“Well, this is the kind of affair it was; and if thou art a wise man, decide it according to thy wisdom of Tsar: A husband had a wife, and while he was living she found a sweetheart for herself; she robbed her husband, and went away with the sweetheart



beyond the sea; and now she is with that man. What, to thy thinking, should be done with that wife?"

"According to my wisdom of Tsar I will utter the following sentence: Tie them both to the tails of horses, and let the horses loose in the open field, — let that be their punishment."

"If that is thy judgment, very well," said Ivan. "Come with me as a guest; I will show thee other sights and another wonder."

They went to Ivan's castle, and found there the Tsar's daughter and the servant. As Ivan had commanded, they were still asleep.

There was no help for it; according to the word of the Tsar they tied them both to the tails of horses and urged the horses into the open field, — that was their punishment. But Ivan afterwards married that beautiful, most beautiful maiden whom he had saved from the fire, and they began to live and win wealth.



## THE FOOTLESS AND THE BLIND.

**I**N a certain kingdom, in a certain state, lived a terrible Tsar. He was famed through all lands, — a terror to kings and princes. The Tsar took a thought to marry, and published an order in every town and village that whoever would find him a bride ruddier than the sun, fairer than the moon, and whiter than snow, would be rewarded with countless wealth. The report of this went through the whole kingdom; and from small to great, all were talking and thinking, but no one offered to find such a beauty.

Not far from the king's castle was a large brewery. The working-men came together for some reason, and began to say that a man might get much money from the Tsar, but where could such a bride be found?

“Well, brothers,” said a man, Nikita Koltoma by name, “no one can find a bride for the Tsar without my help; but if I undertake it, then he will find her without fail.”

“What art thou boasting of, thou fool? How couldst thou do that deed? There are famous and rich people, not the like of us, and they are afraid.



Thou couldst not do it in a dream, much less in thy senses."

"Well, say what ye please; but I have faith in myself," said he, "and I'll get her."

"Ah, Nikita, don't boast; thou knowest our Tsar is terrible, and for an empty boast he will put thee to death."

"He won't put me to death; he will reward me with money."

They reported these speeches to the Tsar himself. He was delighted, and gave command to bring Nikita before his bright eyes. The soldiers ran, seized Nikita Koltoma, and hurried him to the palace. His comrades called after him: "Well, brother, thou hast said it; thou thinkest to joke with the Tsar: go now and give answer."

They brought Nikita to the great palace, and the terrible Tsar said to him: "Thou, Nikita, dost boast that thou art able to find me a bride ruddier than the sun, fairer than the moon, and whiter than snow."

"I can, your Majesty."

"Very well, brother. If thou wilt do me that service, I will reward thee with countless treasure and make thee first minister; but if thou hast lied, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders."

"I am glad to serve thee, Great Tsar; but command that I have a holiday for a whole month."

The Tsar consented, and gave over his own signa-



ture an open order to Nikita, commanding that in all eating-houses and inns they should give him gratis all kinds of food and drink.

Nikita went through the capital to enjoy himself. Whatever inn he entered, he showed the paper; immediately they brought him everything that his soul desired. He caroused one day, a second, a third; a week, a second, a third week. And now the term is passed; 't is time to go to the Tsar.

Nikita took farewell of his friends, went to the palace, and asked the Tsar to collect for him twelve brave youths, the same in stature, in hair, and in voice, and to prepare besides thirteen white woven tents with golden embroidery. Everything was soon ready; the young men were collected at once, and the tents made.

“Now, Great Tsar,” said Nikita, “get ready, and we will go for the bride.”

They saddled their good steeds, packed the tents on the horses. After that they had a prayer in the church, took leave of the people of the town, sat on their steeds, and galloped away; nothing but a pillar of dust behind them. They travelled one day, a second, and a third. In the open field was a forge. Said Nikita: “Go straight ahead with God, and I will run into the forge and smoke a pipe.” He entered the forge; fifteen blacksmiths were forging iron inside, striking with their hammers.

“God aid you, brothers !”



“ God save thee, good man ! ”

“ Make me a staff fifteen poods<sup>1</sup> weight.”

“ To make it we are not unwilling; but who will turn the iron? Fifteen poods are no joke.”

“ That is nothing, brothers; you beat with the hammers, and I'll turn the iron.”

The blacksmiths went to work and forged an iron staff of fifteen poods. Nikita took the rod, went out into the field, and threw it up ninety feet, held out his hand; the iron staff fell on his hand, but was not equal to the strength of the hero, it broke in two. Nikita Koltoma paid the blacksmiths for their work, threw the broken rod to them, and rode away. He caught up with his comrades. They travelled three days more; again there was a forge in the open field.

“ Go on, I will enter this forge,” said Nikita. He went into the forge. Twenty-five blacksmiths were working inside, forging iron, pounding with their hammers.

“ God aid thee, boys ! ”

“ God save thee, good man ! ”

“ Make me a staff twenty-five poods in weight.”

“ To forge is no trouble; but where is the man with strength to turn so much iron? ”

“ I will turn it myself.”

He took the twenty-five poods weight of iron, heated it red hot, and turned it on the anvil while the blacksmiths pounded with their hammers. They

<sup>1</sup> One pood = 36 pounds.



made a staff twenty-five poods in weight. Nikita took that staff, went out into the open field, threw it up one hundred and fifty feet, and held out his hand: the staff struck the hero's hand and broke in two.

"No, this will not do," said Nikita. He paid for the work, sat on his horse, and rode away. He overtook his comrades. They travelled a day, a second, and a third. Again there was a forge in the open field.

"Go on," said Nikita; "I will smoke a pipe in this forge."

He entered the forge, where fifty blacksmiths were tormenting an old man. A gray-haired old man was lying on the anvil; ten men were holding him with pincers by the beard, and forty men were pounding him on the sides with hammers.

"Have pity on me, brothers!" cried the old man, with all his strength. "Leave the life in me to do penance!"

"God aid you!" said Nikita.

"God aid thee, good man!" said the blacksmiths.

"Why are ye tormenting the old man?"

"Because he owes each one of us a rouble, and he will not pay it. Why should n't we beat him?"

"What an unfortunate man," thought Nikita; "for fifty roubles he suffers such torment!" And he said to the blacksmiths: "Listen, brothers: I'll pay you for him; let the old man go."

"Agreed, good man; it is all the same to us from whom we get the money, so that we have it."



Nikita took out fifty roubles. The blacksmiths took the money, and the moment they freed the old man out of the iron pincers, he vanished from the eye. Nikita looked. "But where is the old man?"

"Oh, look for him now; he is a wizard!"

Nikita ordered them to forge an iron staff of fifty poods. He hurled it up three hundred feet, and held out his hand: the staff stood the test, did not break. "This will do," said Nikita, and rode off to overtake his comrades. All at once he heard a voice behind him. Nikita Koltoma stopped; he looked around, and saw the same old man running after him.

"Thanks to thee," said the old man, "for saving me from cruel torture; I suffered that misery for thirty years exactly. Here is a present to remember me by, — take it; it will be of use to thee;" and he gave him a cap of invisibility. "Just put it on thy head; no man will see thee."

Nikita took the cap, thanked the old man, and galloped on. He overtook his comrades, and all rode together. Whether it was long or short, near or far, they came to a castle; around the castle was a great iron paling; there was no way to enter, on foot or on horseback. The terrible Tsar said: "Well, brother Nikita, there is no passage farther."

Nikita Koltoma answered: "Why not, Great Tsar? I'll go through the whole world but I'll find thee a bride. This paling is no stop to us. Now, boys, break the paling; open the gate to the wide court!"



The good youths came down from their horses and went at the paling; but no matter what they did, they could not break it, it stood fast.

“Oh, brothers,” said Nikita, “ye sail in shallow water! No use in my depending on you; I must work myself.”

Nikita sprang from his horse, went to the paling, took it with his heroic hand, pulled once, — the whole paling was on the ground. The terrible Tsar and the young men rode in on the broad court, and there on the green meadow they put up their white woven, gold-embroidered tents, ate what God sent them, lay down, and from weariness slept a sound sleep. Each one had a tent, but there was none for Nikita Koltoma; he found three worn bark mats, made himself a little hut, lay down on the bare ground. As to sleeping, he slept not; he waited for what would be.

At the morning dawn Yelena the Beautiful woke up in her chamber, looked out through her lattice-window, and saw that thirteen white woven tents were standing on her green meadow, and in front of all a small hut of bark rugs.

“What is this?” thought the Tsarevna; “whence have these guests come? See, the iron paling is broken!”

Yelena the Beautiful was terribly enraged; she called her powerful, mighty hero, and said: “To horse this minute! Ride to the tents and give all those disobedient scoundrels to a cruel death; throw



their bodies over the fence, and bring the tents to me."

The powerful, mighty hero saddled his good steed, put on his battle-armor, and went toward the unbidden guests. Nikita Koltoma saw him. "Who goes?" asked he.

"And who art thou, rude fellow, that askest?"

These words did not please Nikita. He sprang out of his hut, caught the hero by the foot, dragged him from the horse to the damp earth, raised his iron staff of fifty poods, gave him one blow, and said: "Go now to thy Tsarevna, tell her to stop her pride, not to waste her men, but to marry our terrible Tsar."

The hero galloped back, glad that Nikita had left him alive, came to the castle, and said to the Tsarevna: "Men of immeasurable strength have come to our place. They ask thee for their terrible Tsar in marriage, and commanded me to tell thee to put an end to thy pride, not to waste thy army in vain, and to marry their Tsar."

When Yelena the Beautiful heard such bold speeches she was roused. She summoned her great, mighty heroes, and began to command them all: "My trusty servants, assemble a countless army, take down these white tents, kill these unbidden guests, that the dust of them be not here."

The great, mighty heroes did not stop long. They collected a countless army, sat on their heroic steeds,



and bore down on the white woven, gold-embroidered tents.

As soon as they came to the bark hut, Nikita Koltoma sprang out before them, took his iron staff of fifty poods, and began to wave it at them in different directions. In a little while he had killed the whole army, and of the great, mighty heroes he left but one alive. "Go," said he, "to thy Tsarevna, Yelena the Beautiful, and tell her not to waste her army further. She cannot frighten us with armies. Now I have fought with you alone; what will happen to your kingdom when my comrades wake? We will not leave a stone upon a stone; we will scatter everything over the open field."

The hero returned to the Tsarevna and said: "Thy whole army is slain; against such champions no power can avail." Yelena the Beautiful sent to invite the terrible Tsar to the castle, and then ordered that the sharp arrow be ready; went herself to meet the guests with grace, with honor. The Tsarevna moves on to meet them, and behind her fifty men are bearing the bow and the arrow. Nikita Koltoma saw that that was a hero's bow, and knew at once that it was intended to treat them to the arrow. He put on the cap of invisibility, drew the bow, and aimed the arrow at the Tsarevna's chamber. In one moment he knocked off the whole top of her castle.

There was no help for her now. Yelena the Beau-



tiful took the terrible Tsar by the hand, led him to the white-walled chambers, seated him and his men at the oaken tables with the spread cloths. They began to drink, to eat and rejoice. In the chambers were wonderful ornaments; the whole world might be searched, and the like wouldst thou find nowhere.

After dinner Nikita said to the terrible Tsar: "Does the young woman please thee, or shall we go for another?"

"No, Nikita, there is no use in travelling for nothing; there is not a better than this in the whole world."

"Well, then, marry now she is in our hands. But look out, Great Tsar, don't be caught napping. The first three nights she will try thy strength; she will put her hand on thee and press mightily, mightily: thou canst not endure it in any way. At these times hurry out of the chamber; I'll take thy place and soon tame her."

They set about the wedding, and Tsars have not to make mead or wine; all was on hand. They had the wedding, and the terrible Tsar went to the chamber of Yelena the Beautiful. He reclined on a couch.

Yelena put her hand on his breast and asked: "Is my hand heavy?"

"It is as heavy as a feather on water," answered the terrible Tsar; but he could barely draw breath, so had she pressed his breast. "Wait, I have for-



gotten to give an order; I must give it now." He left the chamber.

Nikita was standing at the door outside. "Well, brother, thou didst speak truly; she came very near putting the breath out of me."

"Never mind, I'll settle the matter; stay here."

Nikita entered the dark chamber, lay on the couch. Yelena thought the Tsar had returned. She put her hand on his breast, pressed and pressed; could do nothing. She put on both hands, and pressed more than before. Nikita Koltoma, like a man in sleep, caught her and hurled her to the floor, so that the whole castle shook. The Tsarevna got up, went quietly to her bed, and fell asleep.

Now Nikita slipped out to the Tsar and said: "Go in boldly; she will do nothing till to-morrow."

With Nikita's aid the Tsar escaped the second and the third time, and then lived as was proper with Yelena the Beautiful. Neither a long nor a short time passed, but Yelena the Beautiful discovered that the terrible Tsar had deceived her, that his strength was not great, that people were laughing at her, that Nikita was the man who had conquered her. She was in a terrible rage, and hid in her heart a cruel revenge.

The Tsar had in mind to go to his own kingdom, and said: "We have stayed here long enough; it is time to go home. Make ready for the road."

They prepared to go by the sea, and had a ship



laden with various precious things. They went on board, and sailed out on the sea; sailed one day, sailed a second, then a third. The Tsar was delighted; he could not rejoice sufficiently that he was taking home a Tsaritsa ruddier than the sun, fairer than the moon, whiter than snow. But Yelena the Beautiful was thinking her own thought, — thinking how to pay for the insult.

At that time an heroic slumber overcame Nikita, and he slept for twelve whole days and nights. When the Tsaritsa saw Nikita in this sleep, she summoned her trusty servants, commanded them to cut off his legs to the knee, put him in a boat, and push him out into the sea. Before her eyes they cut off the legs of the sleeping Nikita, put him in a boat, and pushed him out to sea.

On the thirteenth day poor Nikita woke. He looked around, — water everywhere; he was lying without feet, and no trace of the ship.

Meanwhile the ship sailed on, sailed on. At last the harbor was before them. The cannon thundered, the people ran together. The merchants and boyars met the Tsar with bread and salt, and congratulated him on his marriage. The Tsar called guests, gave feasts, and forgot to think of Nikita. Little time had he left to rejoice. Yelena the Beautiful soon seized his kingdom, took the management of all to herself, and forced him to herd pigs. The wrath of the Tsaritsa was not allayed with this; she gave command to make search



on every side for relatives of Nikita Koltoma, and if any were found to bring them to the palace.

Messengers galloped and searched everywhere. They found a brother of Nikita, — Timoféi Koltoma; they brought him to the palace. Yelena the Beautiful gave command to take out his eyes and drive him from the town,

When they had blinded Timoféi they led him outside the town and left him in the open field. The blind man dragged along, found his way by feeling; he went and went, till he came to the sea-shore, advanced a step or two, and felt water under his feet. He halted, stood on one spot, moved neither backward nor forward; he was afraid to go. All at once the boat with Nikita was borne toward the shore. Nikita saw a man, was rejoiced, and called to him: “Ei! good man; help me to land.”

The blind man answered: “Gladly would I help thee, but I cannot. I am without eyes; I see nothing.”

“But whence art thou, and what is thy name?”

“I am Timoféi Koltoma. The new Tsaritsa, Yelena the Beautiful, had my eyes put out, and drove me from her kingdom.”

“Ah! but thou art my own brother; I am Nikita Koltoma. Go thou, Timoféi, to the right side, — there a tall oak is growing; pull out the oak, bring it here, and throw it from the shore into the water. I will creep out upon it to thee.”



Timoféi turned to the right, stepped forward, and found the tall old oak, seized it with both hands, pulled it out by the roots, drew the oak, and threw it into the water. The tree lay with one end on land, the other came down near the boat. Nikita crept out on shore somehow, kissed his brother, and said: "How is our terrible Tsar living now?"

"Oh, brother," answered Timoféi, "our terrible Tsar is now in great straits, — he is herding pigs in the field! Every morning he gets a pound of bread, a jug of water, and three rods on his back."

Then they talked about how they were to live and how to support themselves. Said Nikita: "Hear, brother, my advice: thou wilt carry me, because I am footless, and I will sit on thee and tell thee where to go."

"Agreed; be it as thou sayest. Though we are both maimed, we shall serve for one sound man."

So Nikita sat on his brother's shoulders and showed him the way. Timoféi walked and walked, and came into a slumbering forest. In that forest stood the cabin of Baba-Yaga. The brothers entered the cabin; there was not a soul inside.

"Well, brother," said Nikita, "feel in the oven. Is n't there some food?"

Timoféi crawled to the oven, took out every kind of food, put it on the table, and they both began to put the food away; from hunger they ate everything clean. Then Nikita began to examine the cabin. He



saw on the window a small whistle, placed it to his lips and began to whistle. He looks — what sort of wonder! His blind brother is dancing, the cabin is dancing, the table, the dishes are dancing, everything dancing; the pots were broken into bits.

“Enough, Nikita, stop playing,” begged the blind man; “my strength can hold out no longer.”

Nikita stopped whistling, and that moment everything was silent. All at once the door opened, in walked Baba-Yaga, and she screamed with a loud voice: “Oh, homeless vagrants, to this minute not a bird has flown past, nor a beast run by here; and ye have come, devoured my food, broken my pots! Very good; I’ll settle with you!”

“Silence, old carrion! We shall be able to settle with thee ourselves. Here, brother Timoféi, hold the old witch firmly!”

Timoféi caught the Baba-Yaga in his arms, squeezed her hard, hard; but Nikita seized her that moment by the hair and dragged her through the cabin.

“Oh, fathers,” begged Baba-Yaga, “I’ll be of use to you myself; whatever ye want I’ll get you!”

“Well, then, old woman, speak. Canst thou get us healing and living water? If thou gettest it, I’ll let thee go alive into the white world; if not, then I’ll give thee to a cruel death.”

Baba-Yaga agreed, and led them to two springs. “Here are for you the healing and living water.”

Nikita Koltoma took the healing water, poured it



on himself, and his legs grew out. They were quite healthy, but would n't move. He took living water, moistened his legs, and began to use them. The same happened to Timoféi Koltoma: he washed the hollows of his eyes with healing water, eyes came in his head just as if they had never been injured, but saw nothing; he washed them with the living water, and they began to see better than ever.

The brothers thanked the old woman, let her go home, and went to liberate the terrible Tsar from suffering and misfortune. They came to the capital town and saw that the Tsar was herding pigs in front of the castle. Nikita Koltoma began to blow on the whistle, and the herdsman with the pigs fell to dancing. Yelena the Beautiful saw this from the window; she was furious, and gave command to take a bunch of rods and flog the pigherd and the musicians.

The guard ran out, seized them, brought them to the castle to treat them to rods. When Nikita Koltoma came to Yelena the Beautiful he made no delay, but seized her white hands and said: "Dost know me, Yelena the Beautiful? I am Nikita Koltoma. Well, terrible Tsar, she is in thy power; what thou wishest, that do."

The Tsar gave command to shoot her, and he made Nikita his first minister; he honored him always, and obeyed him in all things.



## KOSHCHÉI WITHOUT-DEATH.

THERE was a Tsar who had one son, and when the Tsarevich was an infant his nurses and maids used to sing to him, " Baiyú, baiyú, Ivan Tsarevich; when thou'lt grow up a man thou'lt find thee a bride in the thirtieth kingdom, beyond the thrice ninth land, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna, and her marrow flows from bone to bone."

Fifteen years had passed for the Tsarevich, and he went to ask leave to search for his bride. " Where wilt thou go?" asked his father. " Thou art still too small."

" No, father; when I was small the nurses and maids sang to me, and told where my bride lives; and now I am going to find her."

The Tsar gave his blessing and sent word to all kingdoms that his son, Ivan Tsarevich, was going for his bride.

Well, the Tsarevich came to a town, gave his horse to be cared for, and went himself to walk along the streets. He walked, and saw that on the square they were punishing a man with a whip. " Why," asked he, " do ye flog him?"

" Because," answered they, " he went in debt ten thousand to an eminent merchant, and did not pay



in season. And whoso redeems him, that man's wife Koshchéi Without-Death will bear away."

Now the Tsarevich thought and thought, and then went off. As he was walking through the town he came out again on the square, and they were still beating that man. Ivan Tsarevich pitied him and resolved to redeem him.

"I have no wife," thought Ivan; "there is no one to take from me." He paid the ten thousand and went to his lodgings.

All at once the man whom he had redeemed ran after him and called: "God save thee, Ivan Tsarevich! If thou hadst not redeemed me, thou couldest not have gained thy bride in a lifetime; but now I will help thee. Buy me a horse and saddle straightway."

The Tsarevich bought him a horse and saddle, and asked: "What is thy name?"

"They call me Bulat the hero."

They sat on the horses, went their way and road. When they came to the thirtieth kingdom, Bulat said: "Well, Ivan Tsarevich, give orders to buy and roast chickens, ducks, and geese, so that there may be plenty of everything, and I will go to get thy bride. And see to it: every time I run to thee, cut the right wing of a bird, and hand it to me on a plate."

Bulat the hero went to the lofty tower where Vasilissa Kirbítýevna was sitting, threw a stone lightly, and broke the summit of the gilded tower. He ran



to the Tsarevich and said to him: "What, art thou sleeping? Give me a hen."

Ivan Tsarevich cut off the right wing and gave it on a plate. Bulat took the plate, ran to the tower, and cried out: "Hail, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna! Ivan Tsarevich gave command to bow to thee, and asked me to give thee this hen."

Vassilissa was frightened, and sat in silence. Bulat gave answer to himself instead of her: "Hail, Bulat the hero! Is Ivan Tsarevich in good health?"

"Glory be to God, in good health.

"But why stand there, Bulat the hero? Take the key, open the cupboard, drink a glass of *vodka*, and go with God."

Bulat the hero ran to Ivan Tsarevich and said: "Art sitting here? Give me a duck."

He cut off the wing, and gave it on a plate.

Bulat bore it to the tower and said: "Hail, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna! Ivan Tsarevich gave command to bow to thee, and sent thee this duck."

She sat there, said nothing; but he answered instead of her: "Hail, Bulat the hero! Is Ivan Tsarevich well?"

"Glory be to God, he is well.

"But why stand there, Bulat the hero? Take the key, open the cupboard, drink a glass, and go with God."

Bulat ran again to Ivan Tsarevich. "Art thou sitting here? Give me a goose."



Ivan cut off the right wing and gave it on a plate. Bulat the hero bore it to the tower. "Hail, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna! Ivan Tsarevich gave command to bow to thee, and sent thee this goose."

Vassilissa Kirbítyevna took the key quickly, opened the cupboard, and reached a glass of *vodka*. Bulat the hero took not the glass, but seized the maiden by the right hand, drew her out of the tower, and seated her on the Tsarevich's steed. They galloped away, the good hero and the beautiful soul-maiden, with all horse-speed.

Next morning Tsar Kirbít woke and rose. He saw that the top of the tower was broken and his daughter stolen; he grew powerfully angry, and gave command to pursue over all roads and ways.

Whether our heroes travelled much or little, Bulat took the ring from his hand, hid it, and said: "Go on, Ivan Tsarevich; but I will turn back and look for my ring."

Vassilissa Kirbítyevna began to implore: "Do not leave us, Bulat the hero; if it please thee, thou shalt have my ring."

"Impossible, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna; my ring was priceless. My own mother gave it me, and when giving, she said: "Wear and lose it not; forget not thy mother."

Bulat the hero galloped back and met the pursuers on the road. He slew them all straightway, left but one man to take news to the Tsar, hurried back, and caught up with the Tsarevich.



Whether they went much or little, Bulat hid his handkerchief and said: "Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, I have lost my handkerchief! Ride on thy road and way; I will soon come up with thee."

He turned back, went some versts, and met pursurers twice as many; he slew them all, and returned to Ivan, who asked: "Hast found the handkerchief?"

"I have found it."

Dark night overtook them. They pitched a tent; Bulat lay down to sleep, left Ivan Tsarevich on guard, and said to him: "If need be, rouse me."

Ivan Tsarevich stood and stood, grew tired; sleep began to bend him; he sat down at the tent and fell asleep.

From wherever he came, Koshchéi Without-Death bore away Vassilissa Kirbítyevna. Ivan Tsarevich woke up at dawn, saw that his bride was gone, and began to weep bitterly. Bulat the hero woke up and asked: "Why art thou weeping?"

"Why should I not weep? Some one has borne away Vassilissa Kirbítyevna."

"I told thee to keep watch. That is the work of Koshchéi Without-Death. Let us set out in search of her."

Long and long did they ride, till they saw two shepherds herding a flock. "Whose herd is that?"

The herdsmen answered: "This is the herd of Koshchéi Without-Death."

Bulat and Ivan Tsarevich asked the herdsmen if



Koshchéi Without-Death lived far from there, how to go to his house, what time they went home with the flock, and how they shut it in. Then they came down from their horses, wrung the necks of the shepherds, dressed themselves in their clothes, drove the herd home, and stood at the gate.

Ivan Tsarevich had a gold ring on one of his fingers, Vassilissa had given it to him. Vassilissa had a goat, and she washed herself morning and evening with the milk of that goat. The maid ran with a vessel, milked the goat, and was carrying the milk. Bulat took the Tsarevich's ring and threw it into the vessel.

"Oh, my dove," said the maid, "thou art getting impudent!" She came to Vassilissa Kirbítyevna and complained. "Now," said she, "the herdsmen have begun to make sport of us, — they threw a ring into the milk."

"Leave the milk; I will strain it myself," said Vassilissa. She strained the milk, saw the ring, and gave command to send the herdsmen to her. The herdsmen came.

"Hail, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna!" said Bulat the hero.

"Hail, Bulat the hero! Be well, Tsarevich! How did God bring you?"

"We came for thee, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna; thou wilt hide from us nowhere. We should find thee even on the bottom of the sea."



She seated them at the table, gave them every sort of food and all kinds of wine.

Said Bulat the hero: "When Koshchéi comes home from hunting, ask him, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna, where his death is. And now it would not be amiss for us to hide."

As soon as the guests had hidden, Koshchéi Without-Death was flying home from the hunt. "Tfu-tfu!" said he; "of old there was n't a sign of Russia to be heard with hearing or seen with sight; but now Russia runs into one's eyes and mouth."

Said Vassilissa: "Thou hast been flying through Russia thyself, and art full of its odor; so to thy thinking dost find it here."

Koshchéi ate his dinner and lay down to rest. Vassilissa came to him, threw herself on his neck, fondled him, and kissed him, saying: "My dear love, hardly was I able to wait for thee. I did not expect to see thee alive; I feared that savage beasts had devoured thee."

Koshchéi laughed aloud. "Simple woman! her hair is long, but her wit is short. Could savage beasts eat me?"

"But where is thy death, then?"

"My death is in the broom which lies around at the threshold."

As soon as Koshchéi had flown away, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna ran to Ivan Tsarevich.

Bulat asked: "Well, where is Koshchéi's death?"



“In a broom thrown around at the threshold.”

“No, he lies with design; thou must ask him more cunningly.”

Vassilissa Kirbítyevna formed a plan. She took the broom, gilded it, adorned it with various ribbons, and placed it on the table. When Koshchéi Without-Death flew home, he saw the broom on the table, and asked why that was done.

“How was it possible,” answered Vassilissa Kirbítyevna, “that thy death should roll around at the threshold? Better let it lie on the table.”

“Ha, ha, ha! The woman is simple; her hair is long, but her wit is short! Could my death be here?”

“Where is it, then?”

“My death is hidden in the goat.”

As soon as Koshchéi went off to the hunt, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna took the goat and adorned it with ribbons and bells, and gilded its horns. Koshchéi saw the goat; again he laughed. “Oh, the woman is simple; her hair is long, but her wit is short!”

“My death is far from here. On the sea, on the ocean, is an island; on that island stands an oak; under the oak is buried a chest; in the chest is a hare, in the hare a duck, in the duck an egg, and in the egg my death,” said he, and flew away.

Vassilissa Kirbítyevna told all this to Ivan Tsarevich. They took supplies and went to find Koshchéi's death. Whether they travelled long or short, they ate all their provisions and began to be hungry.



A dog with her whelps happened in their way. "I will kill her," said Bulat the hero; "there is nothing else to eat."

"Do not kill me," said the dog, "do not make my children orphans, and I will serve thee myself."

"Well, God be with thee."

They went farther. On an oak was an eagle with eaglets. Said Bulat the hero: "I will kill the eagle."

"Kill me not," said the eagle, "make not my children orphans; I will serve thee myself."

"Let it be so; live to thy health."

They came to the ocean sea wide; on the shore a lobster was crawling. Said Bulat the hero: "I will kill it with a blow."

"Strike me not, good hero; there is not much good in me. Wilt eat me, thou 'lt not be satisfied. The time will come when I will serve thee myself."

"Well, crawl off with God," said Bulat the hero. He looked on the sea, saw a fisherman in a boat, and shouted, "Come to shore." The fisherman brought the boat. Ivan Tsarevich and Bulat the hero sat in it and went to the island; they landed, and came to the oak. Bulat the hero caught the oak with his mighty hands and tore it out with the roots. They took the chest from under the oak, opened it; out of the chest sprang a hare, and ran with all its breath.

"Ah!" said Ivan Tsarevich, "if the dog were here now, she would catch the hare."

Behold, the dog is bringing the hare. Bulat the



hero tore it open; out of the hare flew the duck and rose high in the air.

“Ah!” said Ivan Tsarevich, “if the eagle were here, she would catch the duck.” And already the eagle was bringing the duck.

Bulat the hero tore open the duck; an egg rolled out and fell into the sea.

“Ah!” said Ivan Tsarevich, “if the lobster would pull it out.” The lobster was crawling and bringing the egg. They took the egg, went to Koshchéi Without-Death, struck him with the egg on the forehead; that moment he stretched out and died.

Ivan Tsarevich took Vassilissa Kirbítyevna, and they went their way. They travelled and travelled; dark night overtook them; they pitched their tent. Vassilissa Kirbítyevna lay down to rest. Said Bulat the hero, “Lie down too, Tsarevich, and I will stand guard.”

At dark midnight twelve doves appeared, struck wing against wing, and became maidens.

“Well, Bulat the hero and Ivan Tsarevich, ye killed our brother, Koshchéi Without-Death, ye carried away our sister-in-law, Vassilissa Kirbítyevna; but no good will come to you either. When Ivan Tsarevich comes home, he will give command to bring out his favorite dog, the dog will break away from the keeper and tear the Tsarevich into small pieces; but whoso hears this and tells Ivan what we have said will become stone to the knees.”



In the morning Bulat the hero roused the Tsarevich and Vassilissa Kirbítyevna; they made ready and went their road and way. A second night overtook them; they pitched their tent in the open field. Again Bulat said: "Lie down to sleep, Ivan Tsarevich; I will stand guard." In the dark midnight twelve doves came flying, they struck wing against wing, and became maidens.

"Well, Bulat and Ivan Tsarevich, ye killed our brother, Koshchéi Without-Death, ye carried away our sister-in-law; but no good will come to you, for when Ivan Tsarevich comes home he will give command to bring out his favorite horse, on which he has ridden since childhood. The horse will tear away from the groom and beat the Tsarevich to death; and whoso hears this and tells him will become stone to the girdle."

Morning came, again they travelled on. A third night overtook them. They pitched their tent and stopped in the open field. Bulat said: "Lie down to sleep, Ivan Tsarevich; I will stand watch." Again at midnight twelve doves came flying, struck wing against wing, and became maidens.

"Well, Bulat and Ivan Tsarevich, ye killed our brother, Koshchéi Without-Death, and carried away our sister-in-law; but no good will come to you. When Ivan Tsarevich comes home he will give command to lead out his favorite cow, on whose milk he has been nourished since childhood. She will tear



away from the herder and raise the Tsarevich on her horns. But whoso sees and hears us, and tells him this, will become altogether stone." They finished the sentence, turned into doves, and flew home.

In the morning Ivan Tsarevich and Vassilissa set out on the road. The Tsarevich came home, married Vassilissa Kirbityevna; and in a day or two he said to her, "I will show thee my favorite dog, with which I played all the time when I was little."

Bulat the hero took his sword, ground it sharp, sharp, and stood at the porch. They were bringing the dog. It tore away from the keeper and ran straight to the porch; but Bulat drew his sword and cut the dog in two. Ivan Tsarevich was angry, but for Bulat's former service he was silent.

The next day he ordered them to bring out his favorite horse. The horse broke his halter, tore away from the groom, and galloped straight at Ivan Tsarevich. Bulat the hero cut off the horse's head.

Ivan Tsarevich was still more in anger, and gave command to seize Bulat and hang him; but Vassilissa Kirbityevna interceded. "Had it not been for him," said she, "thou wouldst never have won me."

On the third day the Tsarevich gave command to lead out his favorite cow. She tore away from the herder and ran straight at the Tsarevich. Bulat cut off her head too.

Now Ivan Tsarevich was so enraged that he would



listen to no one, gave orders to call the headsman to put Bulat to death on the spot.

“Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, if 't is thy wish to put me to death by the executioner, better let me die of myself; only let me speak three speeches.”

Bulat told about the first night, how twelve doves flew to them in the open field, and what they said. That moment he was stone to the knees; he told of the second night, and was stone to the girdle. Now Ivan Tsarevich begged him not to speak to the end. Bulat answered: “'T is all the same now, I am stone to the girdle; it is not worth while to live.” He told of the third night, and was all stone.

Ivan Tsarevich put him in a chamber apart, went there each day with Vassilissa, and wept bitterly.

Years passed on. Once Ivan Tsarevich was weeping over the stone hero Bulat, and heard a voice coming out of the stone: “Why dost thou weep? It is hard for me even as I am.”

“Why should I not weep? How can I help it? Thou knowest I destroyed thee.”

“If thou wishest, thou canst save me. Thou hast two children, — a son and a daughter. Kill them, pour their blood into a vessel, and rub this stone with the blood.”

Ivan Tsarevich told this to Vassilissa Kirbítyevna. They grieved and mourned; decided to kill their children. They killed them, gathered the blood, and rubbed the stone.



When Bulat the hero came to life he asked the Tsarevich and his wife, "Were ye grieved for the children?"

"We were grieved, Bulat."

"Well, let us go to their room."

They went, and behold, the children were alive! The father and mother were delighted, and in their delight gave a feast to all.



GO TO THE VERGE OF DESTRUCTION AND  
BRING BACK SHMAT-RAZUM.

**I**N a certain kingdom there lived a wifeless, unmarried king, who had a whole company of sharpshooters. They went to the forests, shot birds of passage, and furnished the king's table with game. Among these sharpshooters was one named Fedot, who hit the mark and almost never missed; for this reason the king loved him beyond all his comrades.

Once while shooting in the early morning, just at dawn, Fedot went into a dark, dense forest, and saw a blue dove sitting on a tree. He aimed, fired, struck her wing, and she fell to the damp earth. The sharpshooter picked her up, was going to twist her neck and put her in his bag, when the blue dove spoke: "Oh, brave youth, do not tear off my stormy little head, do not send me out of the white world! Better take me alive, carry me home, put me on the window, and watch. As soon as sleep comes upon me strike me that moment with the back of thy right hand, and thou wilt gain great fortune."

Fedot marvelled. "What can it mean?" thought he; "in seeming a bird, but she speaks with a



human voice. Never has such a thing happened to me before."

He brought the bird home, placed her on the window, and stood waiting. After a short time the bird put her head under her wing and fell asleep. The sharpshooter struck her lightly with the back of his right hand. The blue dove fell to the floor, and became a soul-maiden so beautiful as not to be imagined nor described, but only told about in a tale. Such another beauty could not be found in the whole world.

Said she to the young man, the king's sharpshooter: "Thou hast known how to get me; now know how to live with me. Thou wilt be my wedded husband, and I thy God-given wife. I am not a blue dove, but a king's daughter."

They agreed. Fedot married her, and they lived together. He is happy with his young wife, but does not forget his service. Every morning at dawn he takes his gun, goes out into the forest, and shoots game, which he carries to the king's kitchen.

His wife sees that he is wearied from this hunting, and says: "Listen, my dear. I am sorry for thee. Every God-given day thou dost wander through forests and swamps, comest home wet and worn, and profit to us not a whit. What sort of a life is this? But I know something so that thou wilt not be without gain. Get of roubles two hundred, and we will correct the whole business."



Fedot rushed around to his friends, got a rouble from one, and two from another, till he had just two hundred. "Now," said his wife, "buy different kinds of silk for this money."

He bought the silk; she took it, and said: "Be not troubled; pray to God and lie down to sleep: the morning is wiser than the evening."

He lay down and fell asleep; his wife went out on the porch, opened her magic book, and two unknown youths appeared at once. "What dost thou wish? Command us."

"Take this silk, and in one single hour make a piece of such wonderful tapestry as has not been seen in the world; let the whole kingdom be embroidered on it, with towns, villages, rivers, and lakes."

They went to work, and not only in an hour, but in ten minutes they had the tapestry finished, — a wonder for all. They gave it to the sharpshooter's wife, and vanished in an instant just as if they never had been. In the morning she gave the tapestry to her husband. "Here," said she, "take this to the merchants' rows, sell it, but see that thou ask no price of thy own; take what they give."

Fedot went to the merchants' rows; a trader saw him, came up, and asked: "Well, my good man, is this article for sale?"

"It is."

"What's the price?"

"Thou art a dealer, name the price."



The merchant thought and thought, but could not fix a price. Now a second, a third, and a fourth came; no one could set a price on the tapestry. At this time the mayor of the palace was passing by and saw the crowd; wishing to know what the merchants were talking about, he jumped out of his carriage, came up to them, and said: "Good morning, merchants, dealers, guests from beyond the sea; what is the question?"

"Here is a piece of tapestry that we cannot value."

The mayor looked at the tapestry and marvelled himself. "Look here, sharpshooter," said he, "tell me in truth and sincerity where didst thou get such glorious tapestry?"

"My wife made it."

"How much must one give for it?"

"I know not myself; my wife told me to set no price on it, but what people would give, that would be ours."

"Well here are ten thousand for thee."

Fedot took the money and gave up the tapestry. The mayor was always near the person of the king, ate and drank at his table. When he went to the king's to dine he took the tapestry. "Would it not please your Majesty to see what a glorious piece of work I have bought to-day?"

The king looked; he saw his whole kingdom as if on the palm of his hand. He opened his mouth in amazement.



“This is indeed work; in all my life I have never seen such cunning art. Well, mayor, say what thou pleasest, but I shall not give this back to thee.” Straightway the king took twenty-five thousand out of his pocket, placed the money in the mayor’s hand, and hung the tapestry in the palace.

“That’s nothing,” thought the mayor; “I will order another still better.” Straightway he galloped to find the sharpshooter, found his cottage, went in; and the moment he saw Fedot’s wife he forgot himself, his errand, knew not why he had come. Before him was such a beauty that he would not take his eyes off her all his life; he would have looked and looked. He gazes on another man’s wife, and in his head thought follows thought: “Where has it been seen, where heard of, that a simple soldier possessed such a treasure? Though I serve the king’s person and rank as a general I have never beheld such beauty!”

The mayor came to his mind with difficulty, and went home, gainst his will. From that hour, from that time, he was not his own. Sleeping or waking, he thought only of the beautiful woman; he could neither eat nor drink, she was ever before his eyes. The king noticed the change, and asked: “What has come upon thee, — some grief?”

“Oh, your Majesty, I have seen the sharpshooter’s wife; there is not such a beauty in the whole world! I am thinking of her all the time; I can neither eat nor drink, with no herb can I charm away my sorrow.”



The desire came to the king to admire the woman himself. He ordered his carriage and drove to the soldier's quarters. He entered the room and saw unspeakable beauty. No matter who looked on the woman,—an old man, a youth; each was in love, lost his wits, a heart-flame pinched him. "Why," thought the king, "am I wifeless and single? Let me marry this beauty,—that is the thing. Why is she a sharpshooter's wife? It is her fate to be queen."

The king returned to his palace and said to the mayor: "Listen to me! Thou hast known how to show me this unimaginable beauty, now find the way to get rid of her husband; I want to marry her myself. And if thou dost not put him out of the way, blame thyself; for though thou art my faithful servant, thou'lt die on the gallows."

The mayor went his way sadder than before. How was he to "finish the sharpshooter?" he could not think. As he was going through back lanes and waste places, a Baba-Yaga met him.

"Stop," said she, "servant of the king! I know all thy thoughts. If thou wilt, I will aid thee in this unavoidable sorrow."

"Aid me, grandmother, and I'll pay what thou wishest."

"The king has ordered thee to put an end to Fedot the sharpshooter. That would be easy enough, for he is simple, were it not for his wife, who is awfully cunning. Well, we'll give them



such a riddle that it will not soon be explained. Go back to the king and say: 'Beyond the thrice-ninth land, in the thirtieth kingdom, is an island, on that island a deer with golden horns.' Let the king bring together half a hundred sailors, — the most good-for-nothing fellows, all bitter drunkards, — and order that a rotten old ship which has been out of service for thirty years be fitted for the voyage. Let him send Fedot the sharpshooter on that ship to get the deer with golden horns. In order to go to the island it is necessary to sail neither more nor less than three years, and back from the island three more; six in all. Well, the ship will sail out on the sea, serve about a month, and sink right there; the sharpshooter and the sailors will go to the bottom, every man!'"

The mayor listened to these words, thanked the Baba-Yaga for her counsel, rewarded her with gold, and went off on a run to the king. "Your Majesty," said he, "Fedot can be finished in such and such fashion."

The king consented, and issued an order at once to the navy to prepare for a voyage an old rotten ship, to provision it for six years, and man it with fifty sailors, the most dissolute and bitter drunkards. Messengers ran to all the dram-shops and drinking-houses, collected such sailors that it was dear and precious to look at them. One had a black eye, another had his nose driven to one side.



As soon as it was reported to the king that the ship was ready, he sent for the sharpshooter and said: "Now, Fedot, thou art a hero of mine,—the first shot in the company. Do me a service. Go beyond the thrice-ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom. In that place is an island, on that island lives the deer with golden horns. Take it alive, and bring it to me."

Fedot became thoughtful, knew not what to answer.

"Think, think not," said the king; "but if thou do not the work, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders!"

Fedot wheeled round to the left and went forth from the palace, came home in the evening powerfully sad, not wishing to utter one word.

"Why dost thou grieve, my dearest?" asked his wife. "Is there some mishap?"

He told her all.

"This is why thou art grieved. There is reason, indeed; for it is an exploit, not a service. Pray to God and lie down to sleep; the morning is wiser than the evening: everything will be done."

The sharpshooter lay down and slept. But his wife opened her magic-book, at once two unknown youths appeared before her and asked: "What dost thou wish? What dost thou need?"

"Go beyond the thrice-ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom, to an island; seize there the deer with golden horns, and bring it here."



“We obey; it will be done before dawn.”

They rushed like a whirlwind to the island, caught the deer with golden horns, and brought it straight to Fedot's house. An hour before daybreak all was done, and they vanished as if they had never been. The beautiful wife roused her husband at dawn and said: “Look out; the deer with golden horns is walking in the yard. Take it with thee on board the ship, sail forward five days, on the sixth turn back.”

The sharpshooter put the deer in a close, fastened cage, and had it carried on board the ship.

“What's there?” asked the sailors.

“Oh, supplies and medicine! It's a long voyage; we shall need many a thing.”

The day for sailing came. A great crowd of people went to see the ship leave the wharf. The king went himself, made Fedot chief over all the sailors, and bade him farewell.

The vessel sailed five days on the sea; the shores had long vanished. Fedot ordered a hundred-and-twenty-gallon cask to be rolled on to the deck, and said to the sailors: “Drink, brothers; spare it not, your souls are your measure!”

They were delighted, rushed to the cask, began to drink, and got so drunk that they rolled down on the deck, and fell fast asleep at the side of the cask. Fedot took the helm, turned the ship around toward the harbor, and sailed home. So that the sailors should not know anything about it, he kept pouring



liquor into them from morning till night; when they began to open their eyes after one drunken fit, a new cask was ready. On the eleventh day the ship drew up at the wharf; the flag was hoisted, and guns fired. The king heard the firing, and ran down to the landing. "What does all this mean?" He saw the sharpshooter, fell into a towering passion, and rushed at him furiously. "How hast thou dared to come back before time?"

"But where was I to go, your Majesty? Some fool might have spent ten years in sailing over the seas and got nothing; but I, instead of spending six years, did the work in ten days. Would you be pleased to look at the golden-horned deer?"

Straightway they brought the cage from the ship and let out the golden-horned deer. The king saw that the sharpshooter was right; he could not touch him, he let him go home. The sailors had a holiday for six years; no one could ask them to work during that time, for the voyage was counted as six years, and they had served their time.

Next day the king called the mayor into his presence and threatened him: "What meanest thou; art making sport of me? 'Tis clear thy head is not dear to thee. Do what thou pleasest, but find means of putting Fedot to a cruel death."

"Let me think, your Majesty; we may mend matters." The mayor went his way, betook himself to back lanes and waste places, met the Baba-Yaga.



“Stop, servant of the king! I know thy thoughts: dost wish I will help thee in trouble?”

“Oh, help me, grandmother! Fedot has brought the deer with golden horns.”

“Oh, I have heard that already. It would be as easy to put Fedot out of the way as to take a pinch of snuff, for he is simple; but his wife is terribly cunning. Well, we'll give them another riddle that they will not solve so quickly. Tell the king to send the sharpshooter to the verge of destruction and bring back Shmat-Razum, — that's a task he will not accomplish to all eternity; he will either be lost without tidings, or come back empty-handed.”

The mayor rewarded the old witch with gold and hurried to the king, who heard him and summoned Fedot.

“Fedot,” said the king, “thou art a hero, the best shot I have. Thou hast brought me the deer with golden horns, now thou must do me another service; and if thou wilt not do it, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders. Thou must go to the verge of destruction and bring back Shmat-Razum.”

Fedot turned to the left, walked out of the palace, went home sad and thoughtful.

“My dear,” asked his wife, “why art thou sad, has some misfortune happened?”

“Ah,” said he, “one woe has rolled from my neck and another rolled on! The king sends me to the



verge of destruction to bring back Shmat-Razum. For thy beauty I bear all this trouble and care."

"That," said she, "is no small task,—nine years to go there, and nine to come back, eighteen in all. Will good come of it? God knows. But pray to the Lord and lie down to sleep; the morning is wiser than the evening. To-morrow thou 'lt know all."

After Fedot had lain down, his wife opened her magic book and asked the two unknown youths if they knew how to go to the verge of destruction and bring back Shmat-Razum. They answered: "We know not." In the morning she roused her husband and said, "Go to the king and ask for the road golden treasure, — thou hast eighteen years to wander; when thou hast the money come home for the parting."

Fedot got the money from the king and returned to take farewell of his wife. She gave him a towel and a ball, and said: "When thou goest out of the town throw the ball down before thee, and wherever it rolls do thou follow. Here is a towel of my own work; no matter where thou art, wipe thy face with it after washing."

Fedot took farewell of his wife and comrades, bowed down on all four sides, and went beyond the barrier. He threw down the ball before him; it rolled, rolled on, and he followed after.

About a month had passed, when the king summoned the mayor and said: "The sharpshooter has



gone to wander over the white world for eighteen years; it is evident that he will not come back alive. Eighteen years, as thou knowest, are not two weeks; many a thing may happen on the road. He has much money, and robbers will fall upon him perhaps, strip him, and give him to a savage death. I think we can begin at his wife now. Take my carriage, drive to the soldier's quarters, and bring her to the palace."

The mayor drove to Fedot's house, entered, saluted the sharpshooter's wife, and said: "Hail, witty woman, the king has ordered us to present thee at the palace."

She went. The king received her with gladness, led her to a golden chamber, and spoke these words: "Dost thou wish to be queen? I will take thee in marriage."

"Where has it ever been seen or heard of," asked she, "that a wife was taken from her living husband? Though he is a simple soldier he is my lawful husband."

"If thou wilt not yield of thy free will, I will take thee by force."

The beautiful woman laughed, struck the floor, became a blue dove, and flew out through the window.

Fedot journeyed over many lands and kingdoms, the ball rolling ahead of him all the time. When he came to a river the ball became a bridge; whenever he wanted rest it became a soft couch. Whether it is long or short, a story is soon told, but a deed is not soon done; the sharpshooter arrived at



a splendid palace, the ball rolled to the gate and disappeared. Fedot went straight up the stairs into a rich chamber, where he was met by three maidens of unspeakable loveliness.

“Whence comest, good man, and for what?”

“Oh, beautiful maidens, ye have not let me rest after the long journey, but have begun to inquire. First ye should give me to eat and drink, put me to rest, and then make inquiry.”

Straightway they set the table. When he had eaten and drunk and rested, they brought him water, a basin, and an embroidered towel. He took not the towel, but said, “I have one of my own.” When they saw it they asked: “Good man, where didst thou get that towel?”

“My wife gave it me.”

“Then thy wife is our own sister.”

They called their aged mother. The moment she saw the towel she recognized it. “Why, this is my daughter’s work.” She asked the guest all sorts of questions. He told her how he had married her daughter, and how the king had sent him to the verge of destruction to bring back Shmat-Razum.

“Oh, my dear son-in-law, of that wonder even I have not heard! Wait a moment; maybe my servants have.”

She went out on the balcony and called in a loud voice. Presently all kinds of beasts ran up, and all kinds of birds flew to her. “Hail to you, beasts of



the wilderness, birds of the air! Ye beasts run through all places, ye birds fly everywhere; have ye never heard how to go to the verge of destruction, where Shmat-Razum lives?"

All the beasts and birds answered in one voice: "No; we have never heard!"

Then the old woman sent them all to their homes in hidden places, forests, and thickets; went to her magic book, opened it, and that instant two giants appeared. "What is thy pleasure; what dost thou wish?"

"This, my faithful servants, — bear my son-in-law and me to the ocean sea wide, and stop just in the middle above the very abyss."

Immediately they seized the sharpshooter and the old woman and bore them on like a stormy whirlwind till they stopped just in the middle above the abyss. They stood up themselves like pillars, holding the old woman and the sharpshooter in their arms. The old woman cried out with a loud voice, and all the fishes and living things in the sea swam to her in such multitudes that the blue sea could not be seen for them: "Hail, fish and worms of the sea! Ye swim in all places, ye pass by all islands; have ye not heard how to go to the verge of destruction, where lives Shmat-Razum?"

All worms and fishes answered in one voice, "No; we've not heard!"

All at once an old limping frog, who had been thirty years out of service, pushed her way to the



front and said, "Kwa-kwa! I know where to find such a wonder!"

"Well, then, my dear, thou art the person I need," said the old woman. She took the frog, and commanded the giants to bear them home. They were at the palace in a flash. The old woman asked the frog how her son was to go.

"Oh!" said the frog, "that place is at the rim of the world, — far, far away. I would conduct him myself, but I am very old; I can barely move my legs, — I could n't jump there in fifty years."

The old woman took a bowl with some fresh milk, put the frog in it, gave the bowl to Fedot, and said: "Carry this in thy hand; she will show thee the way."

The sharpshooter took farewell of the old woman and her daughters, and went on his journey, the frog showing him the way. Whether it was near or distant, long or short, he came at last to a flaming river, beyond which was a lofty mountain with a door in the side.

"Kwa-kwa!" said the frog. "Put me down out of the bowl; we must cross the river."

He put her on the ground.

"Now, good youth, sit thou on my back; do not spare me."

He sat on her back and pressed her to the ground; she began to swell, and swelled until she was as big as a stack of hay. The sharpshooter's one care was to keep from falling. "If I fall," thought he, "I





SHE BEGAN TO SWELL, AND SWELLED UNTIL SHE WAS AS BIG AS A STACK OF HAY. *Page 194.*







shall be crushed." The frog cleared the flaming river at a jump, became small as before, and said: "Now, good youth, I will wait here; but do thou enter that door in the mountain. Thou wilt find a cave, — hide thyself well. After a time two old men will come in: listen to what they say, and watch what they do; when they are gone, act as they did."

The sharpshooter entered the door of the mountain; it was so dark in the cave that if a man strained his eyes out he could not see a thing. Fedot felt around and found a cupboard, crept in. After a while two old men entered and said, "Shmat-Razum, feed us!"

That moment, however it happened, the lamps were lighted, the dishes and plates rattled, and various kinds of food and wine appeared on the table. The old men ate and drank, and then ordered Shmat-Razum to remove everything. Everything disappeared in a flash; neither table, nor food, nor wine, nor lights remained. The two old men went out.

The sharpshooter crawled from the cupboard and cried, "Hei, Shmat-Razum!"

"What dost thou wish?"

"Feed me!"

Again the lights, the table, the food and drink appeared as before. Fedot sat at the table and said: "Hei, Shmat-Razum, sit down brother, with me, we'll eat and drink together; it is irksome for me alone."

The voice of the unseen answered: "Oh, kind man!



whence has God brought thee? It is nearly thirty years that I serve these old men in faith and in truth, and all this time they have never once seated me with themselves."

The sharpshooter looked and wondered. He saw no one, but the food was swept from the plates as if with a broom; the bottles raised themselves and poured the wine into glasses, — behold, in a moment bottles and glasses are empty!

"Shmat-Razum, dost thou wish to serve me?" asked the sharpshooter. "I'll give thee a pleasant life."

"Why not? I am sick of being here; and thou, I see, art a kind man."

"All right; pick up everything and come along." The sharpshooter went out of the cave, looked around, saw no one, and asked: "Art thou here, Shmat-Razum?"

"Here; I'll not leave thee, never fear."

"Very well," said Fedot, and sat on the frog, — she swelled, jumped over the river, and became small. He put her in the bowl, and went on the homeward road, came to his mother-in-law, and made his new servant entertain the old woman and her daughters. Shmat-Razum gave them such a feast that the old woman came very near dancing from joy. She ordered that three bowls of milk be given to the frog every day in reward for her faithfulness. The sharpshooter bade good by to his friends and set



out for home. He travelled and journeyed till he was almost wearied to death. "Oh, Shmat-Razum," said he, "if thou couldst only know how tired I am, I am just losing my legs."

"Why not tell me long ago?" asked the other; "I should have brought thee home quickly." With that he seized Fedot and bore him like a rushing whirlwind, so swiftly that his cap fell off.

"Hei, Shmat-Razum, wait a minute; my cap is gone."

"Late, my master; thy cap is now three thousand miles behind."

Towns and villages, rivers and forests, just flashed before the eye; as Fedot was flying over a deep sea Shmat-Razum said: "If thou wishest, I will make a summer-house in the midst of the sea; thou canst rest, and acquire great fortune."

"Well, make it."

They dropped down toward the sea, and behold, where a moment before the waves were rolling, an island rose up, and in the centre a golden pleasure-house.

"Now, my master, sit down in this house, rest, and look at the sea. Presently three merchant-ships will sail by and cast anchor. Invite the merchants, entertain them well, and exchange me for three wonderful things which they have. I'll come to thee again in my own time."

Fedot looked; three merchant-ships were sailing



from the west. The merchants saw the island and wondered.

“What does this mean?” asked they. “How many times have we sailed by here and seen nothing but water, and now an island and a pleasure-house! Let us stand up to the shore, brothers, let us look and admire.”

They stopped the ships, cast anchor; the three merchants stepped into a light boat, went to the island, landed, and saluted Fedot, —

“Hail, worthy man!”

“Good health to you, foreign merchants! We crave kindness. Come in, rejoice, have a good time, and rest yourselves. This pleasure-house was made on purpose for passing guests.” They went in and sat down.

“Hei, Shmat-Razum, meat and drink!” A table appeared; on the table wines and meats, whatever the soul could desire was at hand in a moment. The merchants opened their mouths in amazement.

“Let us exchange,” said they. “Give us thy servant, and take any one of our wonders.”

“What wonders have ye?”

“Look, and thou wilt see.”

One merchant took a small box from his pocket and opened it: that minute a glorious garden was spread over the whole island with flowers and paths; he closed the box, and the garden was gone. The second merchant took an axe from under his skirts



and began to hit, hit strike, a ship came out: hit strike — another ship. He struck a hundred times — a hundred ships. They moved around the island under full canvas, with sailors and cannon. The sailors run and fire guns. The commanders come to the merchant for orders. He amused himself, hid his axe: the ships vanished from the eye, were as if they had never been. The third merchant took a horn, blew into it at one end: that minute an army appeared, cavalry and infantry, with muskets and cannons and flags; from every regiment come reports to the merchant, and he gives them orders. The army marches, with music sounding and banners waving. The merchant took his horn, blew in at the other end: there is nothing. Where has all the power gone to?

“Your wonders are strange,” said the sharpshooter; “but these are all playthings for kings, and I am a simple soldier. If ye will exchange, however, I agree to give you my unseen servant for all three of your wonders.”

“Is not that rather too much?”

“Well, ye know your own business, I suppose; but I will not exchange on other conditions.”

The merchants thought to themselves, “What good are these ships and soldiers and garden to us? Let us exchange, — at least we shall have enough to eat and drink all our lives without trouble.”

They gave the sharpshooter their wonders, and asked: “Shmat-Razum, wilt thou come with us?”



“Why not? It’s all the same to me where I live.”

The merchants returned to their ships and said: “Now, Shmat-Razum, fly about; give us to eat and drink.” They invited all the men, and had such a feast that every one got drunk and slept a sound sleep.

The sharpshooter was sitting in the golden summer-house; he fell to thinking, and said: “I am sorry; where art thou now, trusty servant?”

“Here, my master.”

Fedot rejoiced. “Is n’t it time for us to go home?” The moment he spoke he was borne through the air as if by a whirlwind.

The merchants woke up, and wishing to drink off the effects of their carousal, cried out: “Give us to drink, Shmat-Razum.” No one answered, nothing was brought; no matter how much they screamed and commanded, no result. “Well, gentlemen, this scoundrel has swindled us. Now Satan himself could not find him; the island has vanished, the pleasure-house is gone.” The merchants grieved and regretted; then hoisted their sails and went to where they had business.

The sharpshooter soon arrived at his own kingdom, came down by the seashore. “Shmat-Razum, canst thou build me a palace here?”

“Why not? — it will be ready directly.”

The palace appeared so splendid that it could not be described, — twice as good as the king’s. Now the



box was opened, and all around the palace was a glorious garden, with rare trees and flowers.

The sharpshooter sat by the window admiring the garden when all at once a blue dove flew in through the open window, struck the floor, and became his young wife. They embraced and kissed each other; then made inquiries and gave answer. Said his wife to Fedot: "Since the time thou didst leave me I have lived a lone dove in the forests and thickets."

Next morning the king went out on the balcony, and saw by the shore of the blue sea a new palace, and a green garden around it. "What insolent fellow has built on my land without leave?" Couriers hastened, discovered, reported, that the palace was built by Fedot, who was living there then, and with him his wife.

The king's anger increased. He gave orders to collect troops and go to the sea-shore, destroy the garden, break the palace into small pieces, and give the sharpshooter and his wife to a cruel death.

Fedot saw the strong army approaching. He took his axe quickly, and struck; a ship came forth; he struck a hundred times, — a hundred ships were ready; he blew his horn once, infantry was marching; he blew it a second time, cavalry was galloping. The commanders rushed to him from the ships, from the army, for orders. He ordered them to give battle. The music sounded at once, the drums rattled, the regiments advanced. The hundred ships open a



cannonade on the king's capital. The army moves on at the sound of music and beat of drum. The infantry rout the king's soldiers, the cavalry take them prisoners. The king sees that his army is fleeing, hurries forward himself to stop it. But what could he do? Half an hour had not passed before he was killed.

When the battle was over, the people came together and begged the sharpshooter to take the government of the kingdom into his hands. He agreed, became king, and his wife queen.



## MARYA MOREVNA.

**I**N a certain kingdom in a certain land lived Ivan Tsarevich. He had three sisters. The first was Marya Tsarevna; the second, Olga Tsarevna; the third, Anna Tsarevna. Their father and mother were dead. When dying they said to their son: "Whoever woos first a sister of thine, give her to him; keep not thy sisters with thee long."

The Tsarevich buried his parents, and from sorrow went with his sisters to walk in the green garden. Suddenly a black cloud rose in the sky; a fearful storm was coming. "Let us go home, sisters," said Ivan Tsarevich. They had barely entered the castle when thunder roared, the ceiling opened, and a bright falcon flew into the chamber. The falcon struck the floor, became a gallant youth, and said: "Hail, Ivan Tsarevich! Ere now I came as a guest, but now I'm a suitor. I wish to sue for thy sister, Marya Tsarevna."

"If thou art pleasing to my sister, I shall not restrain her. Let her go, with God."

Marya Tsarevna agreed, the Falcon married her, and bore her away to his own kingdom.

Days followed days, hours chased hours, a whole year was as if it had not been. Ivan Tsarevich went



with his two sisters to walk in the green garden. Again a cloud rose with whirlwind, with lightning. "Let us go home, my sisters," said the Tsarevich. They had barely entered the castle when a thunderclap came, the roof fell apart, the ceiling opened, and in flew an eagle. The eagle struck the floor and became a gallant youth. "Hail, Ivan Tsarevich! Ere now I came as a guest, but now I'm a suitor." And he asked for Olga Tsarevna in marriage.

Ivan Tsarevich answered: "If thou art pleasing to Olga Tsarevna, then let her marry thee; I take not her will from her." Olga Tsarevna consented, and accepted the Eagle in marriage. The Eagle caught her up and bore her to his own kingdom.

Another year passed. Ivan Tsarevich said to his youngest sister: "Let us go to walk in the green garden." They walked a little; again a cloud rose with whirlwind, with lightning. "Come home, my sister, come!" They returned to the castle, but had not sat down when a thunderclap came, the ceiling opened, and in flew a raven. The raven struck the floor and became a gallant youth. The others were beautiful in person, but he was still better.

"Well, Ivan Tsarevich! Ere now I came as a guest, but now I'm a wooer. Give me Anna Tsarevna."

"I take not her will from my sister. If thou hast pleased her, take her in marriage."



Anna Tsarevna married the Raven, and he bore her away to his own kingdom.

Ivan Tsarevich remained alone. He lived a whole year without sisters, grew wearied. "I will go," said he, "to seek out my sisters."

He made ready for the road, travelled and travelled, saw an army, a power lying slain on the field. Said Ivan Tsarevich: "If there is a living man here, let him speak. Who killed this great army?"

A living man answered: "Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna, killed all this great army."

Ivan Tsarevich went farther; he came to white tents. Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna, came forth to meet him. "Hail, Tsarevich! Where does God bear thee? Of thy own will, or against thy will?"

Ivan Tsarevich gave answer: "Good heroes travel not against their will."

"Well, if thy work be not hasty be a guest in my tents."

Ivan Tsarevich was glad; he spent two nights in the tents, pleased Marya Morevna, and married her. Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna, took him with her to her own kingdom. They lived together a time, and then the Korolyevna had a thought to make war; she left to her husband her household, and said: "Go everywhere, see after all things, but look not in this closet."

Ivan Tsarevich could not endure this, but when Marya Morevna had gone he rushed to the closet,



opened the door, looked, and there Koshchéi Without-Death was hanging inside, fastened with twelve chains. Koshchéi implored the Tsarevich: "Take pity on me, give me to drink. Twelve years do I sit here in torment; I have not eaten nor drunk; my throat is parched."

The Tsarevich gave him a whole three-gallon tub of water. He drank it, and begged, "With one tub my thirst cannot be quenched." The Tsarevich gave him another tub. Koshchéi drank that, and begged for a third; and when he had drunk the third tub he regained his former strength, shook his chains, and in one moment broke all twelve.

"God save thee, Ivan Tsarevich!" said Koshchéi Without-Death; "now thou wilt never see Marya Morevna any more than thy own ears;" and he went out a terrific whirlwind, flew through the window, overtook on the road Marya Morevna, the fair Koryevna, seized her, and bore her away.

But Ivan Tsarevich cried bitterly, bitterly, made ready, and went on his road, on his way. "Whatever may happen, I will find Marya Morevna." He travelled one day, he travelled a second; at the dawn of the third day he saw a wonderful palace, near the palace an oak, on the oak a bright falcon. The falcon flew down from the tree, struck the earth, turned into a gallant youth, and shouted: "Ah! my dear brother-in-law, how does God favor thee?"

Marya Tsarevna ran out, met Ivan Tsarevich joy-



ously, asked about his health, his life, and told about her own life and household.

The Tsarevich stayed three days with them, and said: "I cannot stay longer, I am in search of my wife, Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna."

"It is hard to find her," said the Falcon. "In any case leave thy silver spoon here; we will look at it and think of thee."

Ivan Tsarevich left his silver spoon and went his way. He travelled a day, he travelled a second; at the dawn of the third he saw a castle better than the first, at the side of the castle an oak, on the oak sits an eagle. The eagle flew from the tree, struck the ground, turned into a gallant youth, and shouted: "Rise up, Olga Tsarevna; our dear brother is coming." Olga Tsarevna ran out that moment to meet him; she began to kiss, to embrace her brother, to ask about his health, and to tell of her own life and household.

Ivan Tsarevich remained three days with them, and then said: "I have no time to visit longer; I am going to seek my wife, Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna."

Said the Eagle: "It is hard for thee to find her. Leave with us thy silver fork; we will look at it and remember thee."

He left the fork and went his way. He travelled a day, he travelled a second; and on the dawn of the third day he saw a castle better than the other two.



At the side of the castle was an oak, and on the oak a raven was perched. The raven flew down, struck the earth, turned into a gallant youth, and cried: "Anna Tsarevna, hurry out; our brother is coming."

Anna Tsarevna ran out, met him joyously, began to kiss and embrace her brother, to ask about his health, and to tell about her own life and household.

Ivan Tsarevich stayed with them three short days, and said: "Farewell, I am going to look for my wife, Marya Morevna, the fair Korolyevna."

The Raven said: "It is hard for thee to find her; but leave thy gold ring with us, we will look at it and remember thee. If the ring is bright, it means that thou art alive and well; if dim, then we shall know that evil has come on thee."

Ivan Tsarevich left his gold ring and went his way. He travelled a day, he travelled a second; and on the third he came to Marya Morevna. She saw her dear one, rushed on his neck, covered herself with tears, and said: "Ivan Tsarevich, why didst thou not obey me; why didst thou look in the closet and let out Koshchéi Without-Death?"

"Forgive me, Marya Morevna; remember not the past. Better go with me while Koshchéi is not here; mayhap he will not overtake us."

They made ready and went. Koshchéi was out hunting; toward evening he was coming home, his good steed stumbled under him. "Why stumble, hungry crowbait; or dost feel some misfortune?"



The horse answered: "Ivan Tsarevich came and took Marya Morevna away."

"Can we overtake them?"

"Thou mightest sow wheat, wait till it should ripen, reap it, thresh it, make flour, bake five ovens of bread, eat that bread, go in pursuit, and overtake them."

Koshchéi galloped on, overtook Ivan Tsarevich. "Well," said he, "I forgive thee the first time for thy kindness, because thou didst give me water to drink; and a second time I'll forgive thee: but for the third have a care; I will hew thee to pieces."

He took Marya Morevna and led her away. Ivan Tsarevich sat on a stone and wept; he cried and cried, went back for Marya Morevna. Koshchéi Without-Death did not happen to be at home.

"Let us go, Marya Morevna."

"Ah, Ivan Tsarevich, he will overtake us!"

"Let him overtake us; anyhow, we shall pass a couple of hours together." They made ready and started away.

Koshchéi Without-Death was coming home; his good steed stumbled under him. "Why dost thou stumble, hungry crowbait; or feelest thou evil?"

"Ivan Tsarevich came and carried Marya Morevna away."

"Can they be overtaken?"

"Barley might be sown, waited for till ripe, harvested, threshed, and beer made of it; we might



drink the beer, sleep after drinking, then pursue and catch them."

Koshchéi galloped on, rode up, overtook Ivan Tsarevich. "But I have said that thou canst no more see Marya Morevna than look at thy own ears." He took her away and led her home.

Ivan Tsarevich remained alone; he cried and cried, and went back for Marya Morevna. That time Koshchéi was not at home.

"Let us go, Marya Morevna."

"Ah! Ivan Tsarevich, he will come up with us, will hew thee to pieces."

"Let him hew me; I cannot live without thee." They made ready and started.

Koshchéi Without-Death was coming home; his good steed stumbled under him. "Why dost thou stumble, hungry crowbait; or feelest thou evil?"

"Ivan Tsarevich came, and took Marya Morevna away."

Koshchéi galloped on, caught up with Ivan Tsarevich, hewed him into small pieces, put him in a pitched barrel, took that barrel, strengthened it with iron hoops, and cast it into the blue sea. Marya Morevna he took home.

Now the silver grew black at the houses of Ivan Tsarevich's brothers-in-law. "Oh," said they, "it is clear that some evil has happened!"

The Eagle rushed off to the blue sea, caught the barrel, and drew it to shore; the Falcon flew for the



living water, and the Raven for the dead water. All flew together to the same place, broke the barrel, took out the pieces of Ivan Tsarevich, washed them, put them together in proper order. The Raven sprinkled them with dead water, the body grew together and united; the Falcon sprinkled the body with living water. Ivan Tsarevich trembled, rose up, and said, "Oh, how long I have been sleeping!"

"Thou wouldst have slept still longer without us," answered the brothers-in-law. "Come now to our houses."

"No, brothers, I shall go to seek Marya Morevna." He came to her and said, "Discover from Koshchéi Without-Death where he found such a steed."

Behold, Marya Morevna seized a favorable moment, inquired of Koshchéi. Koshchéi said: "Beyond the thrice-ninth land, in the thirtieth kingdom, beyond the fiery river, lives Baba-Yaga; and she has a mare on which she flies round the world each day; she has many other glorious mares. I was her herdsman for three days. I let not one mare stray from her, and for that service Baba-Yaga gave me a colt."

"But how didst thou cross the river of fire?"

"I have a kerchief of such sort that when I wave it on the right side three times, a bridge is made, lofty and high; the fire cannot reach it."

Marya Morevna listened, told all to Ivan Tsarevich, carried away the kerchief, and gave it to him.



Ivan Tsarevich crossed the fiery river, and went to Baga-Yaga. Long did he go without eating and drinking; a bird from beyond the sea, with her little children, happened in his way. "I'll eat one little chick," said Ivan Tsarevich.

"Eat it not, Ivan Tsarevich," begged the bird from beyond the sea; "in time I will serve thee."

He went farther, saw in the forest a swarm of bees. "I'll take some honey," said he.

The queen-bee called out, "Touch not my honey, Ivan Tsarevich; in time I will serve thee."

He left the honey and went on. Then a lioness and her whelp met him. "At least I'll eat this little lion; I feel such hunger that I am sick."

"Touch him not, Ivan Tsarevich; in time I will serve thee."

"Well, let it be as thou sayest."

He went on hungry; he travelled and travelled. There is the house of Baba-Yaga. Around the house stand twelve stakes; on eleven are heads of men,—only one stake is unoccupied.

"Hail to thee, grandmother!"

"Hail to thee, Ivan Tsarevich! Hast come of thy own good will, or from need?"

"I have come to earn of thee an heroic steed."

"Very well, Tsarevich; no need to serve a year with me, but three days in all. If thou wilt herd my mares, I'll give thee an heroic steed; but if not, be not angry, thy head will be on the last stake."



Ivan Tsarevich consented. Baba-Yaga gave him food with drink, and ordered him to begin the work. As soon as he had driven the mares afield, they raised their tails and all ran apart through the meadows. The Tsarevich could not cast his eyes round before they had vanished. Then he began to weep and grow sad; he sat on a stone and fell asleep. The sun was going down when the bird from beyond the sea flew up and roused him.

“ Rise, Ivan Tsarevich; the mares are now home.”

The Tsarevich stood up, came home, but Baba-Yaga was screaming and crying at her mares. “ Why did ye come home? ”

“ How could we help it, when birds from the whole world flew together and almost picked our eyes out? ”

“ Well, to-morrow don't run in the meadows, but scatter through the sleeping forest.”

Ivan Tsarevich slept the night; in the morning Baba-Yaga said: “ See to it, Tsarevich. If thou dost not herd the mares, if thou lokest even one of them, thy stormy head will be on the stake.”

He drove the mares afield. That moment they raised their tails and ran through the sleeping forest. Again the Tsarevich sat down on a stone, cried and cried, then fell asleep. The sun had gone behind the forest when the lioness ran up. “ Rise, Ivan Tsarevich; the mares are driven in.”

Ivan Tsarevich stood up and went home. Baba-



Yaga was screaming and crying more than before at her mares. "Why did ye come home?"

"How could we help coming? Savage beasts ran at us from the whole world, came near tearing us to pieces."

"Well, run to-morrow into the blue sea."

Ivan Tsarevich slept that night; next morning Baba-Yaga sent him to herd the mares. "If thou dost not guard them, thy stormy head will be on the stake."

He drove the mares to the field; that moment they raised their tails and vanished from the eye, ran into the blue sea, and stood to their necks in the water.

Ivan Tsarevich sat on a stone, cried, and fell asleep. The sun had gone beyond the forest when a bee flew up and said: "Ivan Tsarevich, the mares are driven in. But when thou art home, do not show thyself before the eyes of Baba-Yaga; go to the stable and hide behind the manger. There is a mangy little colt lying on the dung-heap; steal him, and at dark midnight leave the place."

Ivan Tsarevich rose up, made his way to the stable, and lay down behind the manger. Baba-Yaga screamed and cried at her mares: "Why did ye come home?"

"How could we help coming home when bees, seen and unseen, flew from the whole world and began to sting us on every side till the blood came!"

Baba-Yaga went to sleep, and just at midnight Ivan



Tsarevich stole from her the mangy colt, saddled him, sat on his back, and galloped to the fiery river; when he came to the river he shook the kerchief three times on the right side, and suddenly, from wherever it came, a high, splendid bridge was hanging over the river. The Tsarevich crossed on the bridge, waved the kerchief on the left side only twice, and there remained above the river a bridge very, very slender.

In the morning Baba-Yaga woke up; the mangy colt is not to be seen with sight. Baba-Yaga, on an iron mortar, rushed off in pursuit with all her breath, urging forward with a pestle, and removing her trail with a broom. She galloped to the fiery river, looked and thought: "The bridge is good." She rode out on it, and the moment she reached the middle the bridge broke. Baba-Yaga went headlong into the river; there a savage death came to her.

Ivan Tsarevich fed his colt in the green meadows, and it became a marvellous steed. The Tsarevich came to Marya Morevna; she ran out to him, threw herself on his neck.

"How has God brought thee to life?"

"In this way and that way," said he; "come with me."

"I am afraid, Ivan Tsarevich. If Koshchéi overtakes us again, thou wilt be cut to pieces."

"No, he will not overtake us. I have a glorious, heroic steed now; he goes like a bird."

They sat on the horse and rode off. Koshchéi



Without-Death was coming home ; under him stumbled his steed.

“ Why stumble, hungry crow-bait ; or feelest thou evil ? ”

“ Ivan Tsarevich came, took away Marya Morevna.”

“ Can we overtake him ? ”

“ God knows ! Now Ivan Tsarevich has an heroic steed better than I.”

“ I cannot stand this,” said Koshchéi the Deathless, “ I’ll give chase.”

Whether it was long or short, he caught up with Ivan Tsarevich, sprang to the ground, and wanted to cut him with his sharp sword. That moment Ivan’s horse struck, with all the sweep of his hoof, Koshchéi Without-Death, and smashed his skull. The Tsarevich finished him with his club. Then he raised a pile of wood, made a fire, burned Koshchéi Without-Death on the fire, and scattered the ashes to the wind.

Marya Morevna mounted Koshchéi’s horse, and Ivan Tsarevich his own. They went to visit the Raven, then the Eagle, and last the Falcon ; wherever they came they were met with joy.

“ Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, we did not think to see thee ! It was not for nothing thou didst struggle ; another such beauty as Marya Morevna could not be found if sought for in the whole world.”

They visited and feasted, and set out for their own kingdom ; arrived there, gained wealth, and drank mead.



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VARIANT OF THE RESCUE OF IVAN TSAREVICH  
AND THE WINNING OF THE COLT.

EAGLE son of Eagle flew to the sea and brought mighty winds, the sea rose, and threw the barrel on shore. Falcon son of Falcon grasped the barrel in his talons, bore it high, high in the air, and dropped it thence to the ground. The barrel fell and was broken in pieces; but Raven son of Raven carried healing water and living water and sprinkled Ivan Tsarevich with them. Then all three of them caught him up and bore him to the thrice-ninth land, to the thirtieth kingdom. They brought him to the thirtieth kingdom and said: "Go now to the blue sea, where lives a marvellous mare; in front of her twelve men are mowing hay, and twelve rakers are raking what they mow: she follows them and eats the hay. When the mare drinks water, the blue sea rises in waves and leaves fall from the trees; when she scratches herself on hundred-year oaks, they fall to the ground like bundles of oats. Every month she has one colt; twelve wolves follow her and devour these colts. Bide thy time; and the moment a colt is born with a star on its forehead, seize it quickly,—that colt will be an heroic steed for thee. On that colt Koshchéi Without-Death will not overtake thee." Ivan Tsarevich did as his brothers-in-law taught him.



## YELENA THE WISE.

**I**N a certain kingdom, in a certain land, the Tsar had a golden company; in this company served a soldier, Ivan by name, a hero in appearance. The Tsar took him into favor and began to reward him with rank; in a short time he made him colonel. The superior officers envied him. "Why have we served for our rank as we have thirty years, and he has got every rank all at once? We must get rid of him, or he will go ahead of us."

The generals and counselling boyars arranged a trip on the sea, prepared the ship, invited Ivan the colonel to go with them. They sailed out into the open sea, and went around till late in the evening. Ivan grew tired, lay on a bed, and fell into a deep sleep. That was all the boyars and generals were waiting for. They seized him, put him in a boat, pushed him out to sea, and returned home themselves.

Soon dark clouds came up and a storm began to roar; the waves rose and carried the boat it is unknown whither; they carried it far, far away, and cast it out on an island. Here Ivan woke up, looked, saw a desert land, no trace of the ship, and the sea ran terribly high.



“It is clear,” thought he, “that the ship has been wrecked by the storm, and all my comrades are drowned. Glory be to God that I am safe myself!”

He went to look at the island, walked and walked. Nowhere did he see a springing beast, a flying bird, or a dwelling of man. Whether it was long or short, Ivan wandered to an underground passage; through this he went down a deep precipice, and came to the underground kingdom, where the six-headed serpent lived and reigned. He saw a white-walled castle, entered. The first chamber was empty, in the second there was no one, in the third the six-headed serpent was sleeping a hero's sleep. At his side stood a table, on the table an enormous book was lying.

Ivan opened the book and read to the page where it was written that a Tsar had never a son, but always a Tsaritsa had sons. He took and scratched out these words with a knife, and in place of them wrote that a Tsaritsa had never a son, but always a Tsar had sons.

In an hour's time the serpent turned to his other side, woke up, opened his eyes, saw Ivan, and asked: “From what place hast thou come? I live so many years in the world and I have not seen one man in my kingdom.”

“How from what place? But thou knowest I am thy son.”

“How can that be?” asked the serpent. “I will



look in the book and see if a Tsar can have a son."

He opened the book, read in it what Ivan had written, and was convinced. "Thou art right, my son."

He took Ivan by the hand, led him through all his treasure-chambers, showed him his countless wealth, and they began to live and live on together.

Some time passed, and the six-headed serpent said: "My dear son, here are the keys of all the chambers; go wherever thy desire may lead thee, but do not dare to look into that chamber which is fastened with two locks, one of gold, the other of silver. I will fly around the world, will look at people, and amuse myself."

He gave the keys, and flew away out of the underground kingdom to wander through the white world. Ivan Tsarevich remained all alone. He lived a month, a second and a third month, and the year was coming to an end, when it became dreary for him, and he thought to examine the chambers; he walked and walked till he came straight in front of the forbidden chamber. The good youth could not restrain himself; he took out the keys, opened both locks, the gold and the silver, opened the oaken door.

In that chamber were sitting two maidens riveted in chains: one was Tsarevna Yelena the Wise, and the other her maid. The Tsarevna had golden wings, and her maid silver wings. Said Yelena the Wise:



“Hail, good hero! Do us a service not great: give us each of a glass of spring water to drink.”

Ivan, looking at her unspeakable beauty, forgot all about the serpent, pited the poor prisoners, poured out two glasses of spring water, and gave them to the beautiful women. They drank, shook themselves; the iron rings were broken, and the heavy chains fell. The beautiful women clapped their wings and flew through the open window; then only did Ivan come to his mind. He shut the empty chamber, came out on the porch, sat on the step, hung his stormy head below his mighty shoulders, and grew powerfully, powerfully sad. How was he to give answer? Suddenly the wind began to whistle, a mighty storm rose up, the six-headed serpent flew home.

“Hail, my dear son!”

Ivan answered not a word.

“Why art thou silent; or has something happened?”

“Evil, father, — I did not obey thy command. I looked into that chamber where two maidens were sitting riveted in chains, I gave them spring water to drink, they drank, shook themselves, clapped their wings, and flew out through the open window.”

The serpent was terribly enraged; he began to abuse and curse in every fashion. Then he took an iron rod, heated it red hot, and gave Ivan three blows on the back. “It is thy luck,” said he, “that thou art my son; if thou wert not, I should eat thee alive.”

As soon as Ivan’s back had healed he began to



beg of the serpent: "Father, let me go out into the world to look for Yelena the Wise."

"What couldst thou do? I was thirty-three years getting her, and barely, barely had I the skill to catch her."

"Let me go, father; let me try my fortune."

"Well, after me if thou pleasest. Here is the carpet that flies of itself: wherever thou wishest, there will it bear thee; only I am sorry for thee, since Yelena the Wise is terribly cunning. If thou catch her she will still overreach and deceive thee."

Ivan sat on the carpet that flies of itself, flew out of the underground kingdom, and had n't time to wink before he found himself in a beautiful garden. He went to a pond, sat under a laburnum-bush, and began to look and admire the gold and silver fish swimming in the clear water. Before five minutes had passed, Yelena the Wise had flown to the pond with her maid. They took off their wings at once, put them near the bush, undressed, and ran into the water to bathe.

Ivan took the wings quietly, came from under the bush, and cried with a loud voice: "But now ye are in my hands!"

The beautiful women sprang out of the pond, put on their clothes, came to the good youth, and begged him to give back their wings. "No," said Ivan, "I will not give them for anything. Yelena the Wise, thou hast pleased me more than the bright sun; now



I will take thee to my father and my mother, I will marry thee, and thou shalt be my wife, and I will be thy husband."

The Tsarevna's maid said: "Hear me, good youth: 't is thy wish to marry Yelena the Wise, but why detain me. Better give me my wings; I will serve thee in time."

Ivan thought and thought, and gave her the silver wings. She tied them on quickly, sprang up, and flew far, far away. After that, Ivan made a box, put the golden wings into it, and closed it firmly with a lock. He sat on the self-flying carpet, placed Yelena the Wise at his side, and flew away to his own kingdom. He came to his father, to his mother, brought them his bride, and begged them to love and to favor her. Then there was rejoicing such as no one had seen.

Next day Ivan gave his mother the key of the box. "Take care of it for a time," said he, "give it to no one; and I will go to the Tsar and invite him to the wedding."

As soon as he had gone, Yelena the Wise ran in: "Mother, give me the key of the box; I must get clothes to dress for the wedding." The mother, knowing nothing, gave her the key without fear. Yelena the Wise ran to the box, raised the lid, took her wings, put them on, clapped them once and again; that was all they saw of her.

The bridegroom came home. "Mother, where is my bride. It is time to prepare for the crown."



“ Oh, my dear son, she has flown away ! ”

Deeply did the good youth sigh ; he took farewell of his father and his mother, sat on his self-flying carpet, and flew to the underground kingdom, to the six-headed serpent, who saw him and said : “ Well, daring head, did I speak in vain when I said that thou couldst not get Yelena the Wise ; and if thou didst get her she would deceive thee ? ”

“ Thou art right, father ; but no matter what comes, I will try again, I will go to get her. ”

“ Ah ! thou irrestrainable fellow, knowest thou she has a rule that whoever wants to marry her must hide three times, and if she finds him she will have his head cut off ? Many a hero has gone to her, but all to the last man have laid down their stormy heads ; and the same is preparing for thee. But here is a flint and steel for thee : when Yelena the Wise makes thee hide, strike the flint with the steel, — strike out a spark, and set fire to the grass of the steppe. At that moment a blue-winged eagle will appear and raise thee above the third range of clouds ; if that does not succeed, strike fire again, and let it into the blue sea. A giant pike will swim to land, will take thee and bear thee away to the depth of the sea ; and if Yelena the Wise finds thee, then there is no place in which thou canst hide from her. ”

Ivan Tsarevich took the flint and steel, thanked the six-headed serpent, and flew off on the carpet. Whether it was long or short, near or far, he flew



beyond the thrice-ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom, where lived Yelena the Wise. Her palace was flashing like fire; it was made of pure silver and gold. At her gate, on iron points, were the heads of eleven heroes. Ivan the good youth became thoughtful. "Eleven heads on the points, mine will surely be the twelfth." He came down in the broad court, went on the lofty porch, and straight to the chamber.

Yelena the Wise met him. "Thou!" said she, "why art thou here?"

"I want to take thee in marriage."

"Well, all right, try. If thou art able to hide from me, I will marry thee; if not, thou wilt pay with thy head."

Ivan went out in the open field, took his flint and steel, struck fire, and put it to the steppe grass. From wherever he came, a blue-winged eagle flew to him and said, with the voice of a man, "Good youth, sit on me quickly; hold firmly, or thou wilt fall."

Ivan sat on the eagle, grasped firmly with his hands. The eagle clapped his wings, and rose high beyond the third range of clouds. He is well hidden; it seems no one can find him. But Yelena the Wise had a mirror: all she had to do was to look in it, and the whole world was open to her. She knew in a moment where and what was going on in the white world. She stepped up to that mirror, looked in it, and knew every secret.

"Stop, cunning fellow," cried Yelena the Wise,



with a loud voice; "I see thou hast flown above the third range of clouds. The blue-winged eagle bore thee; it is time to come down to the earth."

Ivan came to the earth, slipped off the eagle, went to the sea-shore, struck fire, and put it to the blue sea. Suddenly, from wherever he came, a giant pike swam to shore. "Well, good youth, creep into my mouth; I'll hide thee in the bottom of the sea." He opened his jaws, took in the young man, sank with him in the abyss of the sea, and covered him with sand.

"Now," thought Ivan, "perhaps it will be all right." But the point was not there.

Yelena the Wise barely looked in the mirror, and saw everything at once. "Stop, cunning fellow, I see thou hast gone into the giant pike, and thou art sitting now in the abyss of the sea beneath rolling sands; it is time to come to shore." The pike swam to shore, threw out the good youth, and vanished in the sea.

Ivan returned to the broad court of Yelena the Wise, sat on the porch, and grew powerfully thoughtful and sad. At that moment the maid of Yelena the Wise ran up the stairway. "Why are thou sad, good youth?"

"How can I be glad? If I hide not the third time, I must part with the white world; so here I am sitting and waiting for death."

"Grieve not; foretell no evil on thy own stormy



head. Once I promised to serve thee; I spoke no empty word. Come, I will hide thee.”

She took Ivan by the hand, led him in, and put him behind the mirror. A little later Yelena the Wise ran to the chamber, looked and looked in the mirror. She could not see her bridegroom; the appointed time had passed. She grew angry, and with vexation struck the glass; it fell into fragments, and before her stood Ivan the brave youth.

There was no help for it, — she had to yield this time. At the house of Yelena the Wise there was no need of waiting to make mead or wine; that day they had a noble feast and a wedding. They were crowned, and began to live, — to live on and win wealth.



## THE SEVEN SIMEONS, FULL BROTHERS.

THERE lived an old man and his old wife; they lived many years, to a great age. Then they began to pray to God to give them a child who in their old age might help them to work. They prayed a year, they prayed a second, they prayed a third and fourth, they prayed a fifth and a sixth, and did not receive a child; but in the seventh year the Lord gave them seven sons, and they called them all Simeon. When the old man with the old woman died, the Simeons were left orphans all in their tenth year.

They ploughed their own land, and were not worse than their neighbors. It happened one time to Tsar Ador, the ruler of all that country, to pass their village, and he saw the Seven Simeons working in the field. He wondered greatly that such small boys were ploughing and harrowing. Therefore he sent his chief boyar to inquire whose children they were. When the boyar came to the Simeons he asked why they, such small children, were doing such heavy work?

The eldest Simeon answered that they were orphans, that there was no one to work for them, and



said at the same time that they were all called Simeon. The boyar left them and told this to the Tsar, who wondered greatly that so many small boys, brothers, should be called by one name. Therefore he sent the same boyar to take them to the palace. The boyar carried out the command of the Tsar and took all the Simeons with him. When the Tsar came to the palace he assembled the boyars and men of counsel and asked advice in the following words:

“My boyars and men of counsel, ye see these seven orphans who have no relatives: I wish to make of them men who may be grateful to me hereafter; therefore I ask counsel of you. In what science or art should I have them instructed?”

To this all answered as follows: “Most Gracious Sovereign, as they are now grown somewhat and have reason, dost thou not think it well to ask each one of them separately with what science or art he would like to occupy himself?”

The Tsar accepted this advice gladly, and began by asking the eldest Simeon: “Listen to me, my friend: with whatever science or art thou wishest to occupy thyself, in that I will have thee instructed.”

Simeon answered: “Your Majesty, I have no wish to occupy myself with any science or art; but if you would give command to build a forge in the middle of your court-yard, I would forge a pillar reaching to the sky.”

The Tsar saw that there was no reason to teach



this Simeon, for he knew well enough the art of a blacksmith; still, he did not believe that the boy could forge a pillar to the very sky, therefore he gave command to build in quick time a forge in the middle of his court-yard. After the first he called the second Simeon. "And thou, my friend, whatever science or art thou wishest to study, in that will I give thee to be taught."

Then that Simeon answered: "Your Majesty, I do not wish to study any science or art; but if my eldest brother will forge a pillar to the sky, then I will climb that pillar to the top, and will look at all lands, and tell you what is going on in each one of them."

The Tsar considered that there was no need to teach this Simeon either, because he was wise already. Then he asked the third Simeon: "Thou, my friend, what science or art dost thou wish to learn?"

Simeon answered: "Your Majesty, I do not wish to learn any science or art; but if my eldest brother will make me an axe, with the axe I will strike once, twice; that moment there will be a ship."

Then the king answered: "I need shipwrights, and thou shouldst not be taught anything else." Next he asked the fourth: "Thou, Simeon, what science or art dost thou wish to know?"

"Your Majesty," answered he, "I do not wish to know any science; but if my third brother should make a ship, and if it should happen to that ship to



be at sea, and an enemy should attack it, I would seize it by the prow and take the ship to the underground kingdom; and when the enemy had gone away I would bring it back to the surface of the sea."

The Tsar was astonished at these great wonders of the fourth Simeon, and he said: "There is no need to teach thee either." Then he asked the fifth Simeon: "And thou, Simeon, what science or art dost thou wish to learn?"

"I do not wish to learn any," said he; "but if my eldest brother will make me a gun, with that gun, if I see a bird, I will hit it, even one hundred versts distant."

"Well, thou wilt be a splendid sharpshooter for me," said the Tsar. Then he asked the sixth Simeon: "Thou, Simeon, what science dost thou wish to begin?"

"Your Majesty," said Simeon, "I have no wish to begin any science or art; but if my fifth brother will shoot a bird on the wing, I will not let it reach the earth, but will catch it and bring it to you."

"Thou 'rt very cunning," said the Tsar; "thou wilt take the place of a retriever for me in the field." Then the Tsar asked the last Simeon: "What art or science dost thou wish to learn?"

"Your Majesty," answered he, "I do not wish to learn any science or art, because I have a most precious craft."

"But what is thy craft? Tell me, if it please thee."



“I know how to steal dexterously,” said Simeon, “so that no man can steal in comparison with me.”

The Tsar became greatly enraged, hearing of such an evil art, and said to his boyars and men of counsel: “Gentlemen, how do ye advise me to punish this thief Simeon? Tell me what death should he die?”

“Your Majesty,” said they all to him, “why put him to death? He is a thief in name, but a thief who may be needed on an occasion.”

“For what reason?” asked the Tsar.

“For this reason: your Majesty is trying now these ten years to get Tsarevna Yelena the Beautiful, and you have not been able to get her; and besides, have lost great forces and armies, and spent much treasure and other things. Mayhap this Simeon the thief may in some way be able to steal Yelena the Beautiful for your Majesty.”

The Tsar said in answer: “My friends, ye tell me the truth.” Then he turned to Simeon the thief and asked: “Well, Simeon, canst thou go to the thrice-ninth land, to the thirtieth kingdom, and steal for me Yelena the Beautiful? I am strongly in love with her, and if thou canst steal her for me I’ll give thee a great reward.”

“Stealing is my art, your Majesty,” answered the seventh Simeon, “and I will steal her for you; only give the command.”

“Not only do I give the command, but I beg thee



to do it; and delay no longer at my court, but take for thyself troops and money, whatever is needed."

"Neither troops nor treasure do I need," answered he. "Let all of us brothers go together, and I will get Tsarevna Yelena the Beautiful."

The Tsar did not like to part with all the Simeons; still, though he regretted it, he was obliged to let them all go together. Meanwhile the forge was built in the court, and the eldest Simeon forged an iron pillar to the very sky; the second Simeon climbed on that pillar to the top, and looked in the direction in which was the kingdom of the father of Yelena the Beautiful. After he had looked he cried from the top of the pillar: "Your Majesty, I see Yelena the Beautiful sitting beyond the thrice-ninth land in the thirtieth kingdom under a window; her marrow flows from bone to bone."

Now the Tsar was still more enticed by her beauty, and said to the Simeons in a loud voice: "My friends, start on your journey at once, for I cannot live without Yelena, the beautiful Tsarevna."

The eldest Simeon made an axe for the third, and for the fifth he made a gun; and after that they took bread for the journey, and Simeon the Thief took a cat, and they went their way. Simeon the Thief had made the cat so used to him that she ran after him everywhere like a dog; and if he stopped on the road, or in any other place, the cat stood on her hind legs, rubbed against him, and purred. So the brothers went



their way for some time, and at last came to the sea, which they had to cross, and there was nothing to cross upon. They walked along the shore and looked for a tree of some kind to make a vessel, and they found a very large oak. The third Simeon took his axe and cut the oak at the very root, and then with one stroke and another he made straightway a ship, which was rigged, and in the ship were various costly goods. All the Simeons sat on that ship and sailed on their journey.

In a few months they arrived safely at the place where it was necessary for them to go. When they entered the harbor they cast anchor at once. On the following day Simeon the Thief took his cat and went into the town, and coming to the Tsar's palace he stood opposite the window of Yelena the Beautiful. At that moment the cat stood on her hind legs and began to rub against him and to purr. It is necessary to say that in that kingdom they knew nothing of cats, and had not heard what kind of beast the cat is.

Tsarevna Yelena the Beautiful was sitting at the window; and seeing the cat, sent straightway her nurses and maidens to ask Simeon what kind of beast that was, would he not sell it, and what price would he take. The maidens and nurses ran out in the street and asked Simeon what kind of beast that was, and would he not sell it?

Simeon answered: "My ladies, be pleased to relate to her Highness, Yelena the Beautiful, that this little



beast is called a cat, that I will not sell it, but if she wishes to have it I will give it to her without price."

The maidens and nurses ran straight to the palace and told what they had heard from Simeon.

Tsarevna Yelena the Beautiful was rejoiced beyond measure, ran out herself, and asked Simeon would he not sell the cat.

Simeon said: "Your Highness, I will not sell the cat; but if you like her, then I make you a present of her."

The Tsarevna took the cat in her arms and went to the palace, and Simeon she commanded to follow. When she came to the palace the Tsarevna went to her father, and showed him the cat, explaining that a certain foreigner had given it to her as a present.

The Tsar, seeing such a wonderful little beast, was greatly delighted, and gave orders to call Simeon the Thief; and when he came, the Tsar wished to reward him with money for the cat; but as Simeon would not take it, he said: "My friend, live for the time in my house, and meanwhile, in your presence, the cat will become better used to my daughter."

To this Simeon did not agree, and said to the Tsar: "Your Majesty, I could live with great delight in your house if I had not the ship on which I came to your kingdom, and which I cannot commit to any one; but if you command, me I will come every day and teach the cat to know your daughter."



The Tsar commanded Simeon to come every day. Simeon began to visit Tsarevna Yelena the Beautiful. One day he said to her: "Gracious lady, often have I come here; I see that you are not pleased to walk anywhere; you might come to my ship, and I would show you such costly brocades as you have never seen till this day."

The Tsarevna went straightway to her father and began to beg permission to go to the ship-wharf. The Tsar permitted her, and told her to take nurses and maidens, and go with Simeon.

As soon as they came to the wharf Simeon invited her to his ship, and when she entered the ship Simeon and his brothers began to show the Tsarevna various rich brocades. Then Simeon the Thief said to Yelena the Beautiful: "Now be pleased to tell your nurses and maidens to leave the ship, because I wish to show you things so costly that they should not see them."

The Tsarevna commanded her maidens and nurses to leave the ship. As soon as they had gone, Simeon the Thief ordered his brothers in silence to cut off the anchor and go to sea with all sail; meanwhile he showed the Tsarevna rich goods and made her presents of some. About two hours had passed while he was showing the stuffs. At last she said it was time for her to go home, the Tsar her father would expect her to dinner. Then she went out of the cabin and saw that the ship was under sail and land no longer in sight.



She struck herself on the breast, turned into a swan, and flew off. The fifth Simeon took his gun that minute and wounded the swan; the sixth Simeon did not let her fall to the water, but brought her back to the ship, where she became a maiden as before.

The nurses and maidens who were at the wharf, seeing the ship move away from the shore with the Tsarevna, ran straight to the Tsar and told him of Simeon's deceit. Then the Tsar sent a whole fleet in pursuit. When this fleet coming up was very near the ship of the Simeons, the fourth Simeon seized the prow and conducted the ship to the underground kingdom. When the ship had become entirely invisible, the commanders of the fleet thought it was lost, with the Tsarevna; therefore they returned, and reported to the Tsar that Simeon's ship had gone to the bottom with Yelena the Beautiful.

The Simeons arrived at their own kingdom successfully, delivered Yelena the Beautiful to Tsar Ador, who for such a mighty service of the Simeons gave liberty to them all, and plenty of gold, silver, and precious stones, married Yelena the Beautiful himself, and lived with her many years.



## THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS.

**I**N a certain kingdom a soldier served in the mounted guard of the king. He served twenty-five years in faithfulness and truth; and for his good conduct the king gave orders to discharge him with honor, and give him as reward the same horse on which he had ridden in the regiment, with all the caparison.

The soldier took farewell of his comrades and set out for his native place. He travelled a day, a second, and a third. Behold, a whole week had gone; a second and third week! The soldier had no money; he had nothing to eat himself, nothing to give his horse, and his home was far, far away. He saw that the affair was a very bad one; he wanted terribly to eat, began to look in one direction and another, and saw on one side a great castle. "Well," thought he, "better go there; maybe they will take me even for a time to serve, — I'll earn something."

He turned to the castle, rode into the court, put his horse in the stable, gave him hay, and entered the castle. In the castle a table was set with food and wine, — with everything that the soul could wish for.

The soldier ate and drank. "Now," thought he, "I may sleep."



All at once a bear came in. "Fear me not, brave hero; thou hast come in good time. I am not a savage bear, but a fair maiden, an enchanted princess. If thou canst endure and pass three nights in this place, the enchantment will be broken, I shall be a princess as before, and will marry thee."

The soldier consented. Now, there fell upon him such a sadness that he could not look on the world, and every moment the sadness increased; if there had been no wine he could not have held out a single night, as it seemed. The second night it went so far that the soldier resolved to leave everything and run away; but no matter how he struggled, no matter how he tried, he found no way out of the castle. There was no help for it, he had to stay in spite of himself.

He passed the third night. In the morning there stood before him a princess of unspeakable beauty. She thanked him for his service, and told him to make ready for the crown (marriage). Straightway they had the wedding, and began to live together without care or trouble. After a time the soldier remembered his native place; he wanted to spend some time there. The princess tried to dissuade him.

"Remain, stay here, my friend, go not away. What is lacking to thee?"

No, she could not dissuade him. She took farewell of her husband, gave him a sack filled with seeds,



and said: "On whatever road thou mayest travel, throw these seeds on both sides. Wherever they fall, that moment trees will spring up; on the trees precious fruit will be hanging in beauty, various birds will sing songs, and tom-cats from over the sea will tell tales."

The good hero sat on his horse of service and went his way. Wherever he journeyed he cast seeds on both sides, and after him forests were rising, just creeping out of the damp earth. He rode one day, he rode a second, a third, and saw in the open field a caravan. On the grass merchants were sitting playing cards, near them a great kettle was hanging, and, though there was no fire under the kettle, it was boiling like a fountain within the pot. "What a wonder!" thought the soldier; "there is no fire to be seen, and in the kettle it is boiling like a fountain, — let me look at it more closely." He turned his horse to the place and rode up to the merchants.

"Hail, honorable gentlemen!" He had no suspicion that these were not merchants, but all unclean. "That is a good trick of yours, — a kettle boiling without fire; but I have a better one."

He took out a seed and threw it on the ground, — that moment a full-grown tree came up; on the tree were precious fruits in their beauty, various birds were singing songs, and tom-cats from over the sea were telling tales. From this boast the unclean knew him.



“Ah,” said they among themselves, “this is the man who liberated the princess! Come, brothers, let us drug him with a weed, and let him sleep half a year.”

They went to entertaining him, and drugged him with the magic weed. The soldier dropped on the grass and fell into deep sleep from which he could not be roused. The merchants, the caravan, and the kettle vanished in a twinkle.

Soon after the princess went out in her garden and saw that the tops of all the trees had begun to wither. “This is not for good,” thought she; “it is evident that evil has come to my husband.”

Three months passed. It was time for his return, and there was nothing of him, nothing. The princess made ready and went to search for him. She went by that road along which he had travelled, — on both sides forests were growing, birds were singing, and tom-cats from over the sea were purring their tales. She reached the spot where there were no more trees, the road wound out into the open field; she thought, “Where has he gone to? Of course he has not sunk through the earth.”

She looked, aside by itself was one of the wonderful trees, and under it her dear husband. She ran to him, pushed, and tried to rouse him. No, he did not wake. She pinched him, stuck pins in his side, pricked and pricked him. He did not feel even the pain, — lay like a corpse without motion.



The princess grew angry, and in her anger pronounced the spell: "Mayest thou be caught by the stormy whirlwind, thou good-for-nothing sleepy head, and be borne to places unknown!"

She had barely uttered these words when the wind began to whistle, to sound, and in one flash the soldier was caught up by a boisterous whirlwind and borne away from the eyes of the princess. She saw too late that she had spoken an evil speech. She shed bitter tears, went home, lived alone and lonely.

The poor soldier was borne by the whirlwind far, far away beyond the thrice-ninth land, to the thirtieth kingdom, and thrown on a point between two seas; he fell on the very narrowest little wedge. If the sleeping man were to turn to the right, or roll to the left, that moment he would tumble into the sea, and then remember his name.

The good hero slept out his half year,—moved not a finger; and when he woke he sprang straight to his feet, looked on both sides. The waves are rolling; no end can be seen to the broad sea. He stands in doubt, asking himself, "By what miracle have I come to this place? Who dragged me hither?" He turned back from the point and came out on an island; on that island was a mountain steep and lofty, touching the clouds with its peak, and on the mountain a great stone. He came near this mountain and saw three devils fighting; blood was just flowing from them, and bits of flesh flying.



“Stop, ye outcasts! What are ye fighting for?”

“But seest thou our father died three days ago and left three wonderful things, — a flying carpet, swift-moving boots, and a cap of invisibility; and we cannot divide them.”

“Oh, ye cursed fellows, to fight for such trifles! If ye wish I’ll divide them between you, and ye shall be satisfied; I’ll offend no one.”

“Well then, countryman, divide between us if it please thee.”

“Very good. Run quickly through the pine woods and gather one hundred poods of pitch, and bring it here.”

The devils rushed through the pine woods, collected three hundred poods of pitch, and brought it to the soldier.

“Now bring me from your own kingdom the very largest kettle that is in it.” The devils brought the very largest kettle, — one holding forty barrels, — and put the pitch into it. The soldier made a fire, and when the pitch was boiling he ordered the devils to take it on the mountain and pour it out from the top to the bottom. The devils did this in a flash. “Now,” said the soldier, “push that stone there; let it roll from the mountain, and follow it. Whoever comes up with it first may take any of the three things; whoever comes up second will choose from the two remaining ones whichever he likes; and the last wonder will go to the third.” The devils pushed



the stone, and it rolled from the mountain quickly, quickly. One devil caught up, seized the stone, the stone turned, and in a flash put him under it, crushed him into the pitch. The second devil caught up, and then the third; and with them it happened as with the first, — they were driven firmly into the pitch.

The soldier took under his arm the swift boots and the cap of invisibility, sat on the flying carpet, and flew off to look for his own country. Whether it was long or short, he came to a hut, went in. In the hut was sitting a Baba-Yaga, bone-leg, old and toothless. "Greetings to thee, grandmother! Tell how I am to find my fair princess."

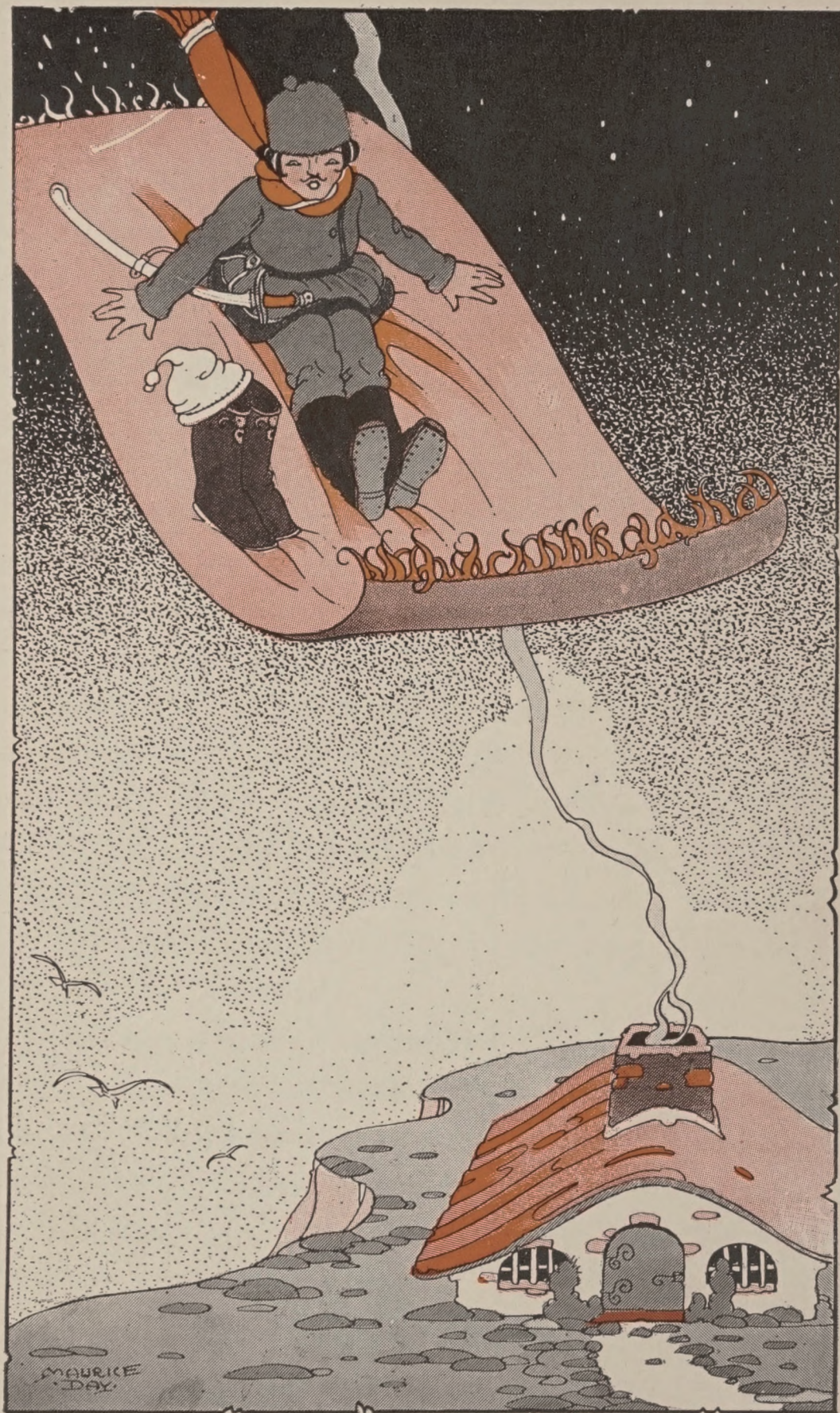
"I have not seen her with sight, I have not heard of her with hearing; but pass over so many seas and so many lands, and there lives my second sister. She knows more than I do; mayhap she can tell thee."

The soldier sat on his carpet and flew away. He had to wander long over the white world. Whenever he wanted to eat or drink, he put on the cap of invisibility, let himself down, entered a shop, and took what his heart desired; then to the carpet and off on his journey. He came to the second hut, entered; inside was sitting Baba-Yaga, bone-leg, old and toothless. "Greeting to thee, grandmother! Dost thou know how I can find my fair princess?"

"No, my dove, I do not know."

"Ah, thou old hag! how many years art thou living





AT LAST HE FLEW TO THE END OF THE WORLD, WHERE THERE WAS A HUT AND NO ROAD BEYOND. *Page 245.*







in the world? All thy teeth are out, and thou knowest no good."

He sat on the flying carpet and flew toward the eldest sister. Long did he wander, many seas and many lands did he see. At last he flew to the end of the world, where there was a hut and no road beyond, — nothing but outer darkness, nothing to be seen.

"Well," thought he, "if I can get no account here, there is nowhere else to fly to." He went into the hut; there a Baba-Yaga was sitting, gray, toothless.

"Greeting to thee, grandmother! Tell me where must I seek my princess."

"Wait a little; I will call all my winds together and ask them. They blow over all the world, so they must know where she is living at present."

The old woman went out on the porch, cried with a loud voice, whistled with a hero's whistle. Straightway the stormy winds rose and blew from every side; the hut just quivered.

"Quieter, quieter!" cried Baba-Yaga; and as soon as the winds had assembled, she said: "My stormy winds, ye blow through all the world. Have ye seen the beautiful princess anywhere?"

"We have not seen her anywhere," answered the winds in one voice.

"But are ye all here?"

"All but South Wind."

After waiting a little, South Wind flew up. The old



woman asked: "Where hast thou been lost to this moment? I could hardly wait for thee."

"Pardon, grandmother; I went into a new kingdom, where the beautiful princess is living. Her husband has vanished without tidings, so now various Tsars and Tsars' sons, kings and kings' sons are paying court to her."

"And how far is it to the new kingdom?"

"For a man on foot thirty-five years, ten years on wings; but if I blow I can put a man there in three hours."

The soldier implored South Wind tearfully to take him and bear him to the new kingdom.

"I will, if it please thee," said South Wind, "provided thou wilt let me run around in thy kingdom three days and three nights as I like."

"Frolic three weeks if thou chooseth."

"Well, I will rest for two or three days, collect my forces and my strength, and then for the road!"

South Wind rested, collected his strength, and said to the soldier: "Well, brother, make ready, we'll go straightway; but look out, have no fear, thou wilt arrive in safety."

All at once a mighty whirlwind whistled and roared, caught the soldier into the air, and bore him over mountains and seas up to the very clouds; and in three hours exactly he was in the new kingdom, where his beautiful princess was living. South Wind said, —



“Farewell, good hero; out of compassion for thee I will not frolic in thy kingdom.”

“Why is that?”

“Because if I frolic, not one house will be standing in the town, not one tree in the gardens; I should put everything bottom upward.”

“Farewell then; God save thee!” said the soldier, who put on his cap of invisibility and went to the white-walled castle. Behold, while he was absent from the kingdom all the trees in the garden had stood with withered tops, and the moment he appeared they came to life and began to bloom. He entered the great hall; there were sitting at the table various Tsars and Tsars’ sons, kings and kings’ sons who had come to pay court to the beautiful princess. They were sitting and entertaining themselves with sweet wines. Whoever filled a glass and raised it to his lips, the soldier that moment struck it with his fist and knocked it from his hand. All the guests wondered at this; but the beautiful princess understood in a moment the reason.

“Surely,” thought she, “my friend is here.” She looked through the window; all the tree-tops in the garden had come to life, and she gave a riddle to the guests. “I had a home-made casket with a golden key; I lost this key, and did not think to find it: but now this key has found itself. Who guesses the riddle, him will I marry.”

The Tsars and Tsars’ sons, the kings and kings’



sons were long breaking their wise heads over this riddle, and could not solve it in any way.

The princess said: "Show thyself, dear friend."

The soldier removed his cap of invisibility, took her by the white hand, and began to kiss her on the sweet mouth.

"Here is the riddle for you," said the fair princess: "I am the home-made casket, and the golden key is my faithful husband."

The wooers had to turn their wagon-shafts around. They all drove home, and the princess began to live with her husband, to live and win wealth.



VASSILISSA THE CUNNING AND THE TSAR  
OF THE SEA.

A PEASANT sowed rye, and the Lord gave him a wonderful harvest. He could barely bring it in from the field. He drew the bundles home, threshed the grain, and poured it into bins; his granary was full to the brim. When he was pouring it in, he thought, "Now I shall live without trouble."

A mouse and a sparrow used to visit that peasant's barn; every one of God's days they came about five times, ate all they could, and then went out. The mouse would spring into her hole, and the sparrow fly away to his nest. They lived together in this way in friendship for three whole years, ate up all the grain; there remained only a mere trifle, about eight bushels, not more.

The mouse saw that the supply was drawing to an end, and began to contrive how to deceive the sparrow and get possession of all that was left. And the mouse succeeded. She came in the dark night-time, gnawed a great hole in a plank, and let all the rye down through the floor to the last grain. Next morning the sparrow came to the granary to have breakfast; looked, there was nothing! The poor



fellow flew out hungry, and thought to himself, "Oh, the cursed creature, she has deceived me! I will fly now to her sovereign, the lion, and present a petition against the mouse; let the lion pass judgment on us in justice."

So he started and flew to the lion. "Lion, Tsar of beasts," said the sparrow, beating to him with the forehead, "I lived with one of thy beasts, the strong-toothed mouse. We lived for three years in one barn and had no dispute. But when the supply began to come to an end, she went to playing tricks, gnawed a hole through the floor, and let all the grain down to herself,—left me, poor fellow, to be hungry. Judge us in truth; if not, I will fly to seek justice and reparation from my own Tsar, the eagle."

"Well, fly off, with God!" said the lion.

The sparrow rushed with his petition to the eagle, related the whole offence, how the mouse had stolen and the lion had upheld her. The eagle grew fiercely angry, and sent a swift courier to the lion straightway: "Come to-morrow with thy army of beasts to such and such a field; I will assemble all the birds and give battle."

Nothing to be done, the lion made a great call and summoned the beasts to battle. There were assembled of them seen and unseen. As soon as they came to the open field, the eagle flew upon them with his winged warriors like a cloud from heaven. A great battle began. They fought for three hours and



three minutes, and the eagle Tsar conquered; he covered the whole field with bodies of beasts. Then he sent his birds to their homes, and flew himself to a slumbering forest, sat on a lofty oak, bruised and wounded, and began to think seriously how to regain his former strength.

This was a long time ago. There lived then a merchant with his wife, and they had not a single child. The merchant rose up one morning and said to his wife: "I have had a bad dream. I thought that a great bird fastened on me, — one that eats a whole ox at a meal and drinks a pailful; and it was impossible to get rid of the bird, impossible not to feed it. I'll go to the forest; mayhap the walk will cheer me."

He took his gun and went to the forest. Whether he wandered long or short in that forest, he wandered till he came to an oak-tree, saw an eagle, and was going to shoot it.

"Kill me not, good hero," said the eagle, in a human voice. "If thou kill me, small will be thy profit. Better take me home, feed me for three years, three months, and three days. I shall recover at thy house, shall let my wings grow, regain my strength, and repay thee with good."

"What pay can one expect from an eagle?" thought the merchant, and aimed a second time. The eagle spoke as at first. The merchant aimed a third time, and again the eagle begged, —



“Kill me not, good hero! Feed me three years, three months, and three days; when I have recovered, when my wings have grown, and I have regained my strength, I’ll repay thee with good.”

The merchant took pity on the eagle, carried him home, killed an ox, and poured out a pailful of mead. “This will serve the eagle for a long time,” thought he; but the eagle ate and drank all at one meal. A bad time to the merchant; from the unbidden guest utter ruin.

The eagle saw the merchant’s loss and said: “Hear me, my host! Go to the open field. Thou wilt find there many beasts killed and wounded. Take their rich furs, bear them to the town to sell. Get food for thyself and me, and there will be some left for a supply.”

The merchant went into the open field and saw many animals lying there, some slain and some wounded. He took the dearest furs, carried them to town to sell, and sold them for much money.

A year passed. The eagle said: “Bear me to that place where the lofty oaks are standing.”

The merchant got his wagon ready and took him to that place. The eagle rose above the clouds, and when he swooped down, he struck a tree with his breast, the oak was split in two. “Well, merchant, good hero,” said the eagle, “I have not regained my former strength; feed me another round year.”

Another year passed. Again the eagle rose be



yond the dark clouds, shot down from above, struck the tree with his breast, split the oak into small pieces. "Merchant, good hero, thou must feed me another whole year; I have not regained my former strength!"

When three years, three months, and three days had passed, the eagle said to the merchant: "Take me again to the same place,—to the lofty oaks." The merchant carried him to the lofty oaks. The eagle soared higher than before; like a mighty whirlwind he struck from above the largest oak, broke it into small bits from the top to the root,—indeed, the forest was reeling all around. "God save thee, merchant, good hero!" said the eagle; "now all my former strength is with me. Leave thy horse, sit on my wings; I will bear thee to my own land, and pay thee for all the good thou hast done." The merchant sat on his wings, the eagle bore him out on the blue sea, and he rose high, high. "Look now," said he, "on the blue sea. Is it wide?"

"As a cart-wheel," answered the merchant.

The eagle shook his wings and threw the merchant, let him fall, gave him to feel mortal terror, and caught him before he had reached the water,—caught him, and rose still higher. "Look on the blue sea. Is it great?"

"As a hen's egg."

The eagle shook his wings, threw the merchant, let him fall, but did not let him reach the water,



caught him, and rose up higher than ever. "Look on the blue sea. Is it great?"

"As a poppy seed."

A third time the eagle shook his wings and threw the merchant from under the heavens; still he did n't let him reach the water, caught him, and asked: "Well, merchant, good hero, hast thou felt what mortal terror is?"

"I have," said the merchant; "and I thought I was lost forever."

"And so did I when thou wert pointing thy gun at me."

The eagle flew with the merchant beyond the sea, straight to the copper kingdom. "Behold, my eldest sister lives here!" said the eagle. "When we shall be guests with her, and she brings presents, take nothing, but ask for the copper casket." The eagle said this, struck the damp earth, turned into a gallant hero.

They went through the broad court. The sister saw him, and was delighted. "Oh, my own brother, how has God brought thee? I have not seen thee for three years and more; I thought thou wert lost forever. How can I entertain thee? How can I feast thee?"

"Entertain not me, my dear sister, I am at home in thy house; but entreat and entertain this good hero. He gave me meat and drink for three years. — did not let me die of hunger."



She seated them at the oaken table, at the spread cloth; she feasted and entertained them, then led them to her treasure-chambers, showed treasures incalculable, and said to the merchant: "Good hero, here are gold, silver, and precious stones; take what thy soul desires."

The merchant gave answer: "I need neither gold, silver, nor precious stones. Give me the copper casket."

"Thou'lt not get it; that is not the boot for thy foot."

The brother was angry at his sister's words; he turned into an eagle, — a swift bird, — caught the merchant, and flew away.

"Oh, my own brother, come back!" cried the sister. "I'll not stand for the casket."

"Thou art late, sister!"

The eagle flew through the air. "Look, merchant, good hero, what is behind us and what before?"

"Behind, a fire is in sight; before us flowers are blooming."

"That is the copper kingdom in flames, and the flowers are blooming in the silver kingdom of my second sister. When we are her guests, and she offers gifts, take nothing, but ask for the silver casket." The eagle came, struck the damp earth, and become a good hero.

"Oh, my own brother," said his sister, "whence hast come; where wert thou lost; why hast thou



been so long without visiting me; with what can I serve thee?"

"Entreat me not, entertain me not, my dear sister, I am at home with thee; but entreat and entertain this good hero, who gave me meat and drink for three years, and did not let me die of hunger."

She seated them at the oaken tables at spread cloths, entertained and feasted them, then led them to treasure-chambers. "Here are gold and silver and precious stones; take, merchant, what thy soul desires."

"I want neither gold, silver, nor precious stones. Give me only the silver casket."

"No, good hero, thy desire is not for the right morsel; thou mightest choke thyself."

The eagle brother was angry, caught up the merchant, and flew away.

"Oh, my own brother, come back! I will not stand for the casket."

"Thou art late, sister!"

Again the eagle flew under the heavens. "See, merchant, good hero, what is behind us, what is before?"

"Behind us a fire is blazing; before us are flowers in bloom."

"That is the silver kingdom in flames; but the flowers are blooming in the golden kingdom of my youngest sister. When we are her guests, and she offers gifts, take nothing; ask only the golden casket."



The eagle came to the golden kingdom and turned into a good hero.

“Oh, my own brother,” said the sister, “whence hast thou come? Where hast thou vanished so long that thou hast not visited me? With what shall I feast thee?”

“Entreat me not, feast me not, I am at home; but entreat and feast this merchant, good hero. He gave me meat and drink for three years, — saved me from hunger.”

She seated them at the oaken table, at the spread cloth, entertained them, feasted them, led the merchant to her treasure-chambers, offered him gold, silver, and precious stones.

“I need nothing; give me only the golden casket.”

“Take it for thy happiness. Thou didst give me meat and drink to my brother for three years, and didst save him from hunger; I regret nothing that is spent on my brother.”

So the merchant lived and feasted a while in the golden kingdom, till the time came for parting, for taking the road.

“Farewell,” said the eagle; “think not on me with harsh feeling, but see that the casket is not opened till thou art at home.”

The merchant journeyed homeward. Whether it was long or short, he grew tired and wished to rest. He stopped in a strange meadow on the land of the Tsar of the Sea; he looked and looked at the golden



casket, could n't endure, opened it. That moment, wherever it came from, there stood before him a great castle all painted, a multitude of servants appeared, inquiring: "What dost thou wish for; what dost thou want?" The merchant, good hero, ate his fill, drank enough, and lay down to sleep. The Tsar of the Sea saw that there was a great castle on his land, and he sent messengers: "Go see what sort of an insolent fellow has come and built a castle on my land without leave; let him go off at once in health and safety."

When such a threatening word came to the merchant he began to think and conjecture how to put the castle into the casket as before; he thought and thought,—no, he could do nothing. "I should be glad to go away," said he, "but how, I can't think myself."

The messengers returned, and reported all to the Tsar of the Sea. "Let him give me what he has at home but knows it not; I will put his palace in the golden casket."

There was no other way, and so the merchant promised with an oath to give what he had at home but knew it not. The Tsar of the Sea put the palace in the golden casket at once. The merchant took the casket and went his way. Whether it was long or short, he came home, his wife met him. "Oh, be thou hearty, my world. Where wert thou lost?"

"Well, where I was I am not now."

"But while thou wert gone the Lord gave us a son."



“ Ah! that is what was at home and I knew it not,” thought the merchant; and he grew very sad and sorrowful.

“ What is the matter? Art thou not glad to be here?” insisted his wife.

“ Not that,” said the merchant; and he told her all that had happened to him, and they grieved and wept together. But people of course cannot cry all their lives. The merchant opened his golden casket, and before them stood a great castle cunningly adorned, and he began to live with his wife and son and gain wealth.

Ten years passed and more; the merchant's son grew up, became wise, fine-looking, a splendid fellow. One morning he rose up in sadness and said to his father: “ My father, I had a bad dream last night. I dreamed of the Tsar of the Sea; he commanded me to come to him. ‘ I am waiting long,’ said he; ‘ it is time to know thy honor.’ ”

The father and mother shed tears, gave him their parental blessing, and let him go to a strange land. He went along the road, along the broad road; he walked over clear fields and wide steppes, and came to a dreamy forest. It was empty all around, not a soul to be seen; but there stood a small cabin by itself, with front to the forest and back to Ivan. “ Cabin, cabin,” said he, “ turn thy back to the forest, thy front to me.” The cabin obeyed, and turned its back to the forest, its front to Ivan. He entered the



cabin, inside was Baba-Yaga, bone-leg, lying from corner to corner. Baba-Yaga saw him and said: "Before now, nothing of Russia was heard with hearing or seen with sight, but now Russia runs to our eyes. Whence dost thou come, good hero, and where dost thou bear thy way?"

"Oh, thou old hag, thou hast given neither meat nor drink to a wayfaring man, and art asking for news!"

Baba-Yaga put drink on the table and various meats; she fed him, she gave him to drink, and put him to rest. Early next morning she roused him, and then she put questions. Ivan the merchant's son told the whole secret, and said: "Teach me, grandmother, how to go to the Tsar of the Sea."

"It is well that thou hast come to me; hadst thou not, thou wouldst have lost thy life, for the Tsar of the Sea is terribly angry because thou didst not go to him long ago. Listen to me: go by this path; thou wilt come to a lake, hide behind a tree and wait a while. Three beautiful doves, maidens, will fly there, — they are the daughters of the Tsar of the Sea; they will loose their wings, undress, and bathe in the lake. One will have many-colored wings: watch the moment, seize the wings, and do not give them up till she consents to marry thee; then all will be right."

Ivan the merchant's son took farewell of Baba-Yaga and travelled the path she had shown, walked and walked, saw the lake, hid himself behind a



thick tree. After a time three doves came flying, one with many-colored wings; they struck the earth, turned into beautiful maidens, removed their wings, and took off their dresses. Ivan the merchant's son kept his eyes open; he crept up in silence and took the many-colored wings. He watched to see what would happen. The fair maidens bathed, came out of the water, two of them dressed straightway, put on their wings, turned into doves, and flew away. The third remained to find her wings. She searched, singing the while: "Tell who thou art, thou who hast taken my wings! If an old man, thou wilt be a father to me; if of middle years, my uncle dear; if a good youth, I will marry thee."

Ivan the merchant's son came from behind the tree. "Here are thy wings!"

"Now tell me, good youth, betrothed husband, of what stock or race art thou, and whither dost thou bear thy way?"

"I am Ivan the merchant's son, and I am going to thy own father, to the Tsar of the Sea."

"And my name is Vassilissa the Cunning."

Now, Vassilissa was the favorite daughter of the Tsar, and was first in mind and beauty. She showed her bridegroom how to go to the Tsar of the Sea, sprang away as a dove, and flew after her sisters.

Ivan the merchant's son came to the Tsar of the Sea, who made him serve in the kitchen, cut wood, and draw water. Chumichka, the cook, did not like



him, and told lies to the Tsar. "Your Majesty," said he, "Ivan the merchant's son boasts that in one night he can cut down a great dense forest, pile the logs in heaps, dig out the roots, plough the land, sow it with wheat, reap that wheat, thresh it, grind it into flour, make cakes of the flour, and give these cakes to your Majesty at breakfast next morning."

"Well," said the Tsar, "call him to me."

Ivan the merchant's son came.

"Why art thou boasting that in one night thou canst cut down a thick forest, plough the land just like a clean field, sow it with wheat, reap the wheat, thresh it, and make it into flour, the flour into cakes for my breakfast next morning? See that by tomorrow morning this is all done; if not, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders."

No matter how Ivan protested, it was no use; the order was given, it had to be carried out. He went away from the Tsar, and hung his stormy head from grief. Vassilissa the Cunning, the daughter of the Tsar, saw him, and asked: "Why art thou grieved?"

"What is the use in telling thee? Thou couldst not cure my sorrow!"

"How knowest? Maybe I can."

Ivan the merchant's son told her what task the Tsar had put on him.

"What task is that! That is a pleasure, — the task is ahead. Go thy way; pray to God and lie



down to rest; the morning is wiser than the evening; toward daylight all will be ready."

Just at midnight Vassilissa the Cunning went out on the great porch and cried in a piercing voice. In one moment laborers ran together from every side, —myriads of them; one was felling a tree, another digging out roots, another ploughing the land. In one place they were sowing, in another reaping and threshing; a pillar of dust went up to the sky, and at daybreak the grain was ground, the cakes baked. Ivan took the cakes to the breakfast of the Tsar.

"Spendid fellow!" said the Tsar; and he gave command to reward him from his own treasure.

Chumichka the cook was angrier than ever at Ivan, began to talk against him again. "Your Majesty, Ivan the merchant's son boasts that in one night he can make a ship that will fly through the air."

"Well, call him hither."

They called Ivan the merchant's son.

"Why boast to my servants that in one night thou canst make a wonderful ship that will fly through the air, and say nothing to me? See this ship is ready by morning; if not, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders."

Ivan the merchant's son from sorrow hung his stormy head lower than his shoulders, and went from the Tsar beside himself. Vassilissa the Cunning said



to him: "Of what art thou grieving; why art thou sad?"

"Why should I not be sad? The Tsar of the Sea has commanded me to build in one night a ship that will fly through the air."

"What sort of task is that? That is not a task, but a pleasure; the task is ahead. Go thy way; lie down and rest: the morning is wiser than the evening; at daybreak all will be done."

At midnight Vassilissa the Cunning went out on the great porch, cried in a piercing voice. In a moment carpenters ran together from every side; they began to pound with their axes, and the work was seething quickly. Toward morning all was ready.

"A hero!" said the Tsar. "Come, now we will take a trip."

They sat on the ship together, and took as a third companion Chumichka the cook; and they flew through the air. When they were flying over the place of wild beasts the cook bent over the side to look out. Ivan the merchant's son pushed him from the ship that moment. The savage beasts tore him into little bits. "Oh," cried Ivan the merchant's son, "Chumichka has fallen off!"

"The devil be with him," said the Tsar of the Sea; "to a dog, a dog's death!" They came back to the palace. "Thou art skilful, Ivan," said the Tsar; "here is a third task for thee. Break my unriden stallion so that he will go under a rider. If thou



wilt break him I will give thee my daughter in marriage; if not, I have a sword, and thy head leaves thy shoulders."

"Now that is an easy task," thought Ivan the merchant's son. He went away from the Tsar laughing. Vassilissa the Cunning saw him and asked about everything; he told her.

"Thou art not wise, Ivan," said she; "now a difficult task is given thee, — no easy labor. That stallion will be the Tsar himself: he will carry thee through the air above the standing forest, below the passing cloud, and scatter thy bones over the open field. Go quickly to the blacksmiths, order them to make for thee an iron hammer three poods in weight, and when thou art sitting on the stallion hold firmly and beat him on the head with the iron hammer."

Next day the grooms brought out the unriden stallion. They were barely able to hold him; he snorted, rushed, and reared. The moment Ivan sat on him he rose above the standing forest, below the passing cloud, flew through the air more swiftly than strong wind. The rider held firmly, beating him all the time on the head with the hammer. The stallion struggled beyond his power, and dropped to the damp earth. Ivan the merchant's son gave the stallion to the grooms, drew breath himself, and went to the palace. The Tsar of the Sea met him with bound head.

"I have ridden the horse, your Majesty."



“Well, come to-morrow to choose thy bride; but now my head aches.”

Next morning Vassilissa the Cunning said to Ivan the merchant's son, “There are three sisters of us with our father; he will turn us into mares, and make thee select. Be careful, take notice; on my bridle one of the spangles will be dim. Then he will let us out as doves; my sisters will pick buckwheat very quietly, but I will not, — I will clap my wings. The third time he will bring us out as three maidens, one like the other in face, in stature, and hair. I will shake my handkerchief; by that thou mayest know me.”

The Tsar brought out the three mares, one just like the other, put them in a row. “Take the one that pleases thee,” said the Tsar.

Ivan the merchant's son examined them carefully. He saw that on one bridle a spangle had grown dim; he caught that bridle and said, “This is my bride.”

“Thou hast taken a bad one; thou mayest choose a better.”

“No use, this will do for me.”

“Choose a second time.”

The Tsar let out three doves just alike, and scattered buckwheat before them. Ivan saw that one of them was shaking her wings all the time. He caught her by the wing and said, “This is my bride.”

“Thou hast not taken the right piece; thou wilt choke thyself. Choose a third time.”



He brought out three maidens, one like the other in face, in stature, and hair. Ivan the merchant's son saw that one waved her handkerchief; he seized her by the hand, "This is my bride."

There was nothing to be done. The Tsar could not help himself, gave Vassilissa the Cunning to Ivan, and they had a joyous wedding.

Not much nor little time had passed when Ivan thought of escaping to his own country with Vassilissa the Cunning. They saddled their horses and rode away in the dark night. In the morning the Tsar discovered their flight and sent a pursuing party.

"Drop down to the damp earth," said Vassilissa the Cunning to her husband; "perhaps thou wilt hear something."

He dropped to the earth, listened, and answered: "I hear the neighing of horses."

Vassilissa turned him into a garden, and herself into a head of cabbage. The pursuers returned to the Tsar empty-handed. "Your Majesty, there is nothing to be seen in the open country; we saw only a garden, and in the garden a head of cabbage."

"Go on, bring me that head of cabbage; that is their tricks."

Again the pursuers galloped on; again Ivan dropped down to the damp earth. "I hear," said he, "the neighing of horses." Vassilissa the Cunning made herself a well, and turned Ivan into a bright falcon; the falcon was sitting on the brink, drinking



water. The pursuers came to the well; there was no road beyond, and they turned back.

“Your Majesty, there is nothing to be seen in the open country; we saw only a well, and a bright falcon was drinking water out of that well.”

The Tsar himself galloped a long time to overtake them.

“Drop down to the damp earth; perhaps thou wilt hear something,” said Vassilissa the Cunning to her husband.

“There is a hammering and thundering greater than before.”

“That is my father chasing us. I know not, I cannot think what to do.”

Vassilissa the Cunning had three things, — a brush, a comb, and a towel. She remembered them, and said: “God is yet merciful; I have still defence before the Tsar.” She threw the brush behind her: it became a great drowsy forest; a man could not put his hand through, could not ride around it in three years. Behold, the Tsar of the Sea gnawed and gnawed the drowsy forest, made a path for himself, burst through it, and was again in pursuit. He is drawing near them, has only to seize them with his hand. Vassilissa threw her comb behind, and it became such a great lofty mountain that a man could neither pass over it nor go around it.

The Tsar of the Sea dug and dug in the mountain, made a path, and again chased after them. Then



Vassilissa the Cunning threw the towel behind her, and it became a great, great sea. The Tsar galloped up to the sea, saw the road was stopped, and turned homeward.

Ivan the merchant's son was near home, and said to Vassilissa the Cunning: "I will go ahead, tell my father and mother about thee, and do thou wait here."

"See to it," said Vassilissa the Cunning, "when thou art home, kiss all but thy godmother; if thou kiss her thou 'lt forget me."

Ivan came home, kissed all in delight, kissed his godmother, and forgot Vassilissa. She stood there, poor thing, on the road, waited and waited; Ivan did not come for her. She went to the town and hired to do work for an old woman.

Ivan thought of marrying; he found a bride, and arranged a feast for the whole world (*mír*<sup>1</sup>).

Vassilissa heard this, dressed herself as a beggar, and came to the merchant's house to beg alms.

"Wait," said the merchant's wife; "I'll bake thee a small cake instead of cutting the big one."

"God save thee for that, mother!" said Vassilissa.

But the great cake got burnt, and the small one came out nicely. The merchant's wife gave Vassilissa the burnt cake and put the small one on the table. They cut that cake, and immediately two pigeons flew out.

<sup>1</sup> *Mír* means in Russian the "world," the "universe;" and also the "commune," or village society.



“Kiss me,” said the cock-pigeon to the other.

“No, thou wilt forget me, as Ivan the merchant’s son forgot Vassilissa the Cunning.”

And the second and the third time he asked, “Kiss me.”

“No, thou ’lt forget me, as Ivan the merchant’s son forgot Vassilissa the Cunning.”

Ivan remembered then; he knew who the beggar was, and said to his father and mother: “This is my wife.”

“Well, if thou hast a wife, then live with her.”

They gave rich presents to the new bride, and let her go home; but Ivan the merchant’s son lived with Vassilissa the Cunning, gained wealth, and shunned trouble.







































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